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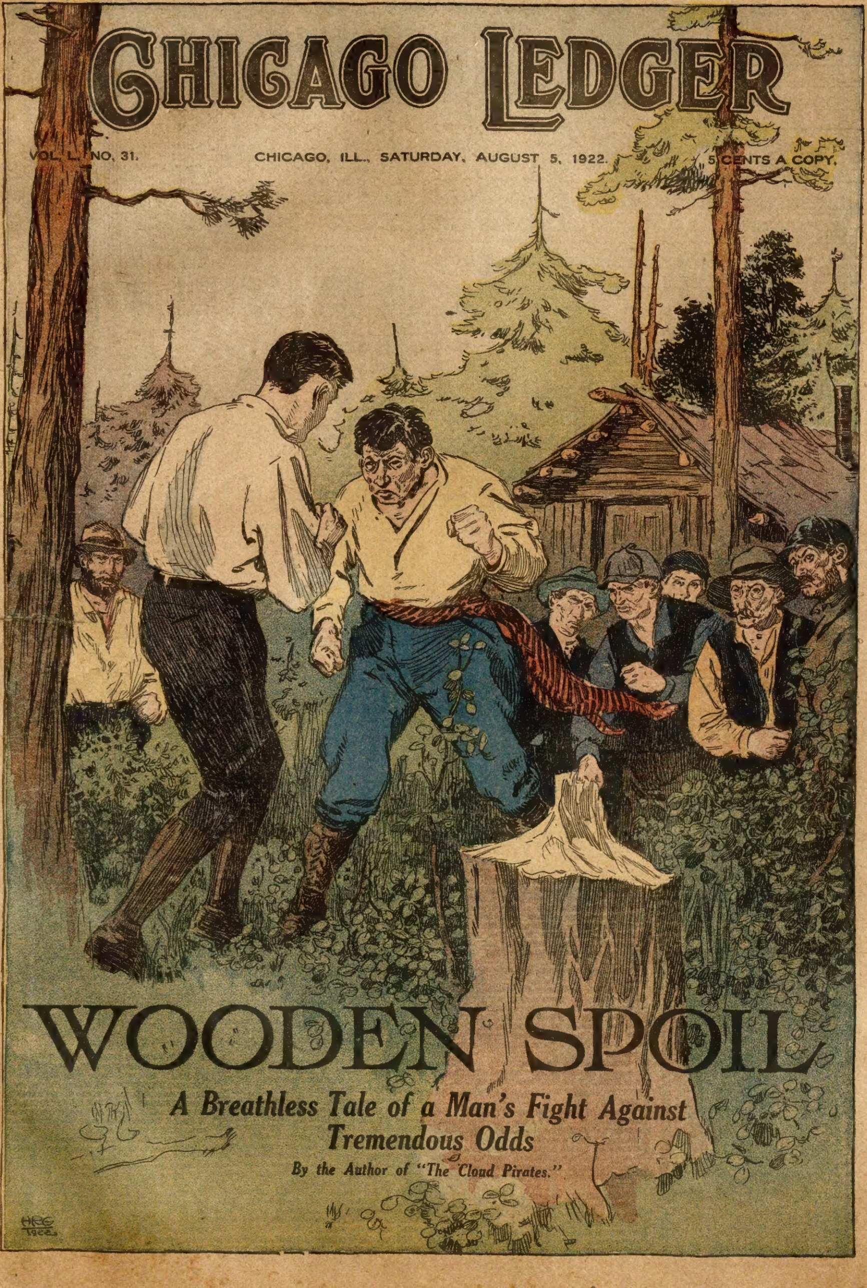

WOODEN SPOIL

A Breathless Tale of a Man's Fight Against Tremendous Odds

By the Author of "The Cloud Pirates."

CHICAGO LEDGER

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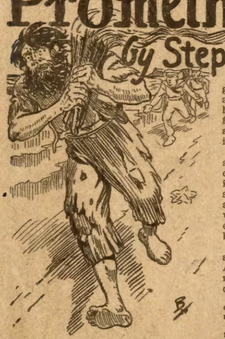
No articles are purchased; only fiction in all lengths. Payment is made on acceptance.

The Joke Page? Yes, It's Here as Usual, but It's on Page 22 This Week. Just as Bright and Colorful as Ever.

Little Odd Story of the Week—No. 32

Promethean Fire

by Stephen Chalmers



He Uttered a Queer Cry, as of Terror; Grabbed an Armful of Burning Sticks From the Fire and Took to His Heels.

ALTHO the chart and sailing directions differed on the exact position, it was undoubtedly the same island; and an upcurl of smoke betokened human habitation, human subsistense and, necessarily, water.

The doctor and the mate accompanied the boat. Nearing the cove beach they saw the sole inhabitant—ragged, hairy, gaunt—waving his arms.

"Castaway!" said the mate.

The sole inhabitant greeted them gladly enough, but without seeming to appreciate what their coming meant to him. He remarked that it was very fine weather for the time of the year; and his eye wandered. Presently he invited them to follow him.

His abode was among rock where a spring bubbled. The doctor observed curiously, all among these rocks, crevices that were fire-stained. Within a shallow cave was a couch of goatskins, and the walls and roof of this grotto were also blackened by smoke. At the entrance, but outside, a wood-fire burned.

He was quite willing that the visitors should fill their breakers at his spring. As the men proceeded to do so, the mate asked the castaway the usual questions. His name?

The castaway scratched his bearded chin and seemed momentarily ambarrassed.

"I've forgot," he said. "I think, maybe, they called me Jim."

"How did you get on the island?" was the next question.

"I came off a ship. I was marooned," he said simply.

"How long ago?"

"Seventeen years, five months and five days—no, six days, countin' this," said the man, gazing at the fire.

The mate offered to take him aboard. The castaway nodded. It seemed to make little difference whether he went or stayed, but it was, perhaps, easier to agree. The mate said he had better get his things together. Jim—if that was his name—said there was nothing he cared to take—nothing worth taking—aboard. Yet, when all were ready he lingered, looking wistfully at the fire. The mate, misunderstanding perhaps, said:

"Kick sand over it. Sort o' 'lights out'—hey?"

Then the castaway seemed to wake up. He uttered a queer cry, as of terror, reached down, grabbed an armful of burning sticks from the fire and, with a fearful glance at his rescuers, took to his heels. He disappeared around a corner of the rocks in a swirl of flame and smoke.

The mate and the men stood still for a moment, rooted with amazement. It was the doctor who first understood.

"He's crazy!" he snapped. "After him, men!"

The boat's crew dropped the breakers and pursued. The mate and the doctor climbed a rock and witnessed the whole thing. The ragged castaway dashed along the beach of the cove, breasting a breeze that fanned into a fierce blaze the fiery mass he hugged. As he ran he yelled defiance of his well-meaning pursuers.

Presently he doubled in the depths of a clump of jungle at the further horn of the cove and retraced his course at a speed that quite outdistanced the unpracticed crew. By this time his rags were afire; his beard ablaze. He was a flying pillar of flame from which burst self-encouraging shouts.

He finally rounded the corner of rocks whence he had started and collapsed before the cave-mouth in his own reeking debris. He was senseless when the mate dragged him clear of the burning fagots, but under the doctor's ministrations he shortly regained consciousness. It was apparent that he had also recovered some degree of sanity.

"The fire?" he whispered.

"It's nearly out, old man—like yourself, I'm afraid," said the doctor in a kindly way.

"Aye—me, too," came the whisper thru scorched lips. "Too bad—kept it going—seventeen years, five months and—and — Just one match!"

He sighed, turned his head a little, and died.

The doctor and the mate and the men who were grouped around all stared, slowly, each upon the others. Significance began to dawn.

Just one match, and the one great dread. It was beyond the imagination of some of them, but the doctor and the mate thought they saw it all. Just one match—the wavering flame under a leaf—the added twigs, larger and larger—the night log. They conceived the sleeper starting from sweet dreams—Lord!—thru seventeen years, five months and—and six days. There must have been times when he nursed the dying thing back to life; forgetful hours when he raced from afar, frantic, perspiring, crashing thru thorn and jungle brake, filled with the one, great dread—his fire!

The doctor mutely pointed to the fire-stained crevices. He must have moved his precious flame many times, seeking a safer altar. And the smoke-blackened cave—Ah, yes!—that night of tempest when he shivered beneath torrents—driven from his cave by the smoking treasure sheltered there.

The doctor bared his head as he raked the smoldering embers about the singed body and added some fresh fuel.

"It's fitting," said he huskily.

The sea-breeze fanned the little pyre and a wisp of smoke became sun-paled flame.

The mate cleared his throat.

"Let's go aboard," said he.

"111" cigarettes
They are GOOD!
10¢
Buy this Cigarette and Save Money

What is Your Problem?

CONDUCTED FOR THE LEDGER

by VICTORIA GREY

Have you a problem of the heart, or one dealing with etiquette, painting, music, writing or acting, which you cannot solve to your own satisfaction? Do you wish specialized information on beauty culture or some other subject? If so, just send in your problem to Victoria Grey, care of the Ledger, and it will be answered in due course in these columns. Miss Grey has had unusually successful experience along these many and diverse lines of activity, and her answers to queries are authoritative. Your name will not be published with your letter if you so request.

DEAR VICTORIA GREY: Is it possible for a beginner in the writing game to determine his aptitude for writing? Is talent positively essential to success in this profession? If so, how may one find out if one possesses it? I am very much interested in writing. I like to create stories. I can "think up" plots, but still I am in doubt as to whether I possess the necessary qualifications for success in this line of endeavor. I am not satisfied with my present position, but have ambition for something higher.. C. G.

Any one would tell you that your letter is styled well. Therefore I think you would have no trouble in presenting your story-plots in words. There are certain restrictions in the plot itself, however, that must be observed, for a story to sell in the magazines. Plots also go out of style from over-use; and what might have gone over two years ago, might not go over this year because writers may have "done it to death." As for talent, many people assert that there is no such thing; that the mere love of an occupation is all one needs to succeed in it. But of course it has to be a love that will surmount all obstacles; a love that a hundred rejection slips from magazines will not dim.

I should advise you to buy regularly the magazines that publish the kind of story you like to write. Then analyze each story after you have read it. Analyze it with pencil and paper. Every little action must go down under its proper "purpose."

One of our greatest writers never sold a story until he had written eighty which failed to go over. Developing writing capabilities is like developing prizefighter muscles. It takes time. It is a steady growth. Well, here's a toast to your success.

Dear Madame: Seeing your offer to answer questions placed before you, I will proceed to ask a few and will be pleased to have them answered. 1. Is it proper for a woman to remove her hat when eating in a cafe? 2. When walking with two girls, should a man walk between them or on the outside? 3. Should a lady rise when being introduced to a young man? 4. When invited out, if one should spill something, what is the proper thing to do?

E. S.

1. No. 2. Opinion is divided on this. The early belief was that a man should walk on the outside to guard the women from possible runaways of horses. Nowadays, however, a man often feels he should walk between so that he can help miladies up and down curbings and over bumps. 3. The lady should remain seated. 4. Merely say, "Oh, I'm sorry," and let it drop with that. It is very poor form to prolong apologies further than this.

Dear Miss Grey: Are coffee and tea drinking hard on the health? When I drink coffee I feel very exhilarated that day, but the next day I'm certainly in the dumps. Blue is no name for it. But if I drink another cup when I'm blue, it livens me up again. Then if I keep doing this every day, after a week I get positively sick; sore throat, fever, headache and everything. Yet everybody tells me that a good cup of coffee won't hurt anybody. Please enlighten me on this.

PERPLEXED.

They used to say "a good glass of whisky won't hurt anybody," too. I am always tempted to add, when I hear that old saying about coffee, "a good dose of morphine won't hurt anybody!"

Coffee is decidedly a very mild drug. If you want to drink it, you have to get used to it very gradually for it not to make you sick. One hates to be queer and refuse coffee when others are enjoying it. So, if you start the morning off with a third of a cup of coffee and gradually increase the amount so that it won't be a full cup until a month or so has elapsed, then your system will have had a chance to get used to it. The system learns to throw off coffee poisoning. But if you overload the system with coffee poisoning when it is not used to it, you are bound to be sick.

And because the system gets used to it, people who drink a certain amount of coffee each day—say, people who drink four cups a day—feel no more enlivened than those who drink no coffee at all. I know a woman who drinks seven cups of coffee daily. She sleeps perfectly at night unless she drinks the eighth cup. One cup beyond what she is accustomed to will keep her awake all night.

I, myself, drink coffee because most of humanity does. I like it only too well. But of course one must not close one's eyes to the fact that the system is doing actual work in throwing off the coffee and tea poisoning; actual work that could better be expended upon one's life work, perhaps. Yet, why not donate this "work" for the sake of sociability? Perhaps the gladness one reaps from a social cup of coffee more than makes up.

* * *

The Landlord Lied.

"YOU fellows are always pitching into us landlords," he said to a reporter, "but we have our side to the story. Yesterday morning I got news that something was wrong with some of my houses on the East Side. I went up there to find forty windows broken out. When I asked one of my tenants the reason of it, he replied:

"'It was the thunder storm that did it.'

"But there has been no thunder storm.

"'Then a hail storm.'

"But there has been no hail storm.

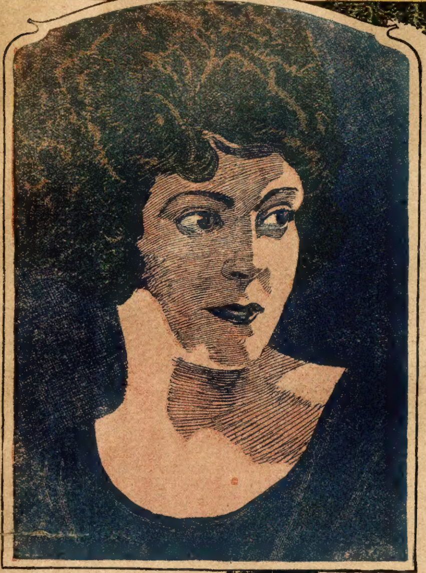
"'Then it was an explosion.'

"But there has been no explosion.

"'Oh, well,' said the man in a careless way, 'maybe an auto ran away or one of those flying machines fell down and did the damage, but please don't bother me with any of your troubles. Just go at it and have the glass put in again, and if the war don't break out again everything will be all right.'"

WOODEN SPOIL

By H. M. Egbert



The Beautiful Madeleine Rosny, Who Inherited Her Ancestors' All-consuming Pride.

THE office in Quebec which Georges Lamartine, the notary, occupied was located inconspicuously in a small building in an old part of the Lower Town. The view from the window, which embraced a part of the harbor, but mainly small by-streets, back doors, and alley-ways, suggested, if not furtiveness, a certain deviousness of method in Monsieur Lamartine's business; and the first sight of the notary did not immediately dispel the impression.

Small, wiry, black-haired, with an air of unconvincing plausibility about him, Monsieur Lamartine was seated at his desk, drumming his fingers, staring out of the window, and turning again to look at a letter signed Hilary Askew, when his boy brought him a card with the same name upon it. Monsieur Lamartine frowned; the visit had followed the letter much too quickly to suit him.

"Tell Monsieur Askew that I am busy with an important court case," he said. "Ask him to call at this time tomorrow."

When the boy was gone he went on drumming his fingers. The expression upon his face was singularly like that of a fox. His hair was wiry, as well as his build, and it might have been observed that his ears had a pronounced helix; the man bore one of those animal resemblances which, according to believers in metempsychosis, reveal the stock from which the individual has arisen by successive incarnations.

"Mr. Askew says he's busy, too, and he'll wait," announced the boy, returning.

The notary considered. "Well, tell him I'll see him in a few minutes for a few minutes," he answered.

When the boy was gone he took down the telephone receiver and gave a number.

"Is that you, Brousseau?" he asked. "Monsieur Hilary Askew has turned up."

There was a sputtering at the other end of the line which made the notary smile.

"I can't say. I haven't seen him yet," said Monsieur Lamartine, in answer. "But if I can't send him home with a smile on his lips and a check in his pocket I shall try to keep him in Quebec until I have seen you. Yes, I'll call you again as soon as he's gone and let you know. And you'd better try to get Morris by long distance and warn him. Good-by."

He hung up the receiver, rang for the boy, and told him to admit Mr. Askew. During the interval that followed he arranged a miscellany of papers in an imposing heap upon his desk. Then he rose to receive his visitor.

He looked at Hilary keenly as he shook hands with him. The young man was different from what he had expected. He was about as big, and he had the same air of American energy; but he appeared more determined, he looked like one of those uncomfortable men who have the knack of disentangling themselves from sophistries. Monsieur Lamartine loved the impersonal in his dealings. He liked committee rooms and arbitration meetings, law volumes that formed a physical as well as a moral barricade, telephone wires and doors and ante-rooms. He was sorry that he had allowed his bulwarks to be breached by this aggressive stranger who radiated personality.

However, Hilary looked good-natured. And he was certainly inexperienced. Monsieur Lamartine gave him a chair and looked very plausible indeed.

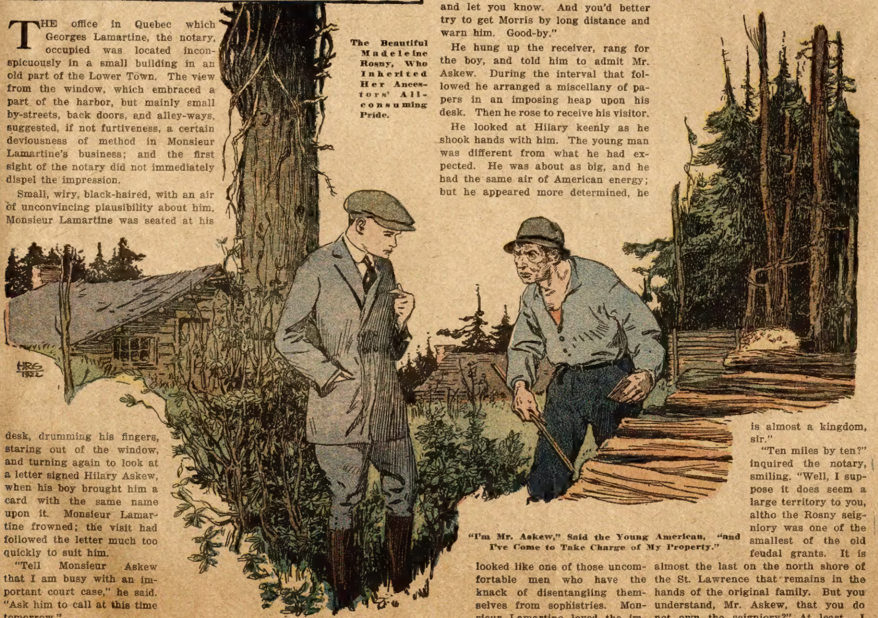
"Your visit has followed very close upon your letter, Mr. Askew," he said. "Perhaps you did not get mine, advising you to wait before coming to Quebec?"

"No," said Hilary, "but I should have come anyway. I want to get this matter settled."

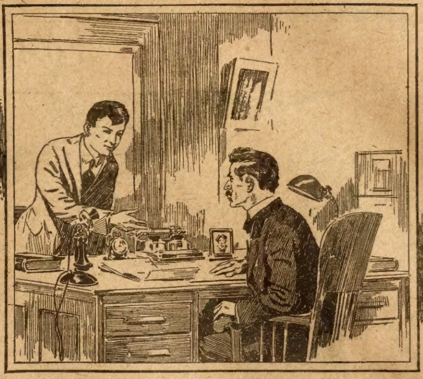
"The American haste," said the notary, looking almost ingenuous. "But the law is not to be taken by storm, least of all in Quebec. There are all sorts of preliminaries and formalities, Mr. Askew. It is only a month since your uncle died. Perhaps it will be months before we can turn over the property to you. I understand that you were not in close touch with your uncle during his latter years?"

"I hadn't seen him since I was a boy. That was what made the legacy a surprising one. He had not shown any interest in me. I had a hard fight to get thru my forestry course. And then to get on my feet. It is a very restricted profession. So when I heard that I had become the owner of a tract of a hundred square miles it seemed like an intervention of Providence. That is almost a kingdom, sir."

"Ten miles by ten?" inquired the notary, smiling. "Well, I suppose it does seem a large territory to you, altho the Rosny seigniory was one of the smallest of the old feudal grants. It is almost the last on the north shore of the St. Lawrence that remains in the hands of the original family. But you understand, Mr. Askew, that you do not own the seigniory?" At least, I



"I'm Mr. Askew," Said the Young American, "and I've Come to Take Charge of My Property."



"But It Is Entirely Irregular, Mr. Askew. Really——" "Let Me Have the Papers, Please," Said Hilary.

suppose you are aware of that fact?"

"The territory?"

"No, the title of Seigneur. You see, the deed specifically exempts the Chateau and a hundred square arpents about it. You own the freehold of the rest, and by an omission in the deed you possess cutting rights even over the small piece of land reserved by Monsieur Rosny, tho naturally your uncle had no intention of cutting the few trees on his private property.

"Four hundred thousand dollars seems a big sum for my uncle to have paid," said Hilary.

THE notary began to look at him keenly again. His eyes, which had the appearance of meeting his visitor's frankly, nevertheless wandered all round the pupil without fixing themselves firmly, except during the short intervals when Hilary looked away. Then the notary's eyes were like augers.

"Your uncle," said Monsieur Lamartine, beginning to drum softly, "made this investment against the advice of a good many people. He was at the time interested in the Adamson Paper Company of Cornwall, which supplied paper to a chain of newspapers in the smaller cities under a long term contract that was beginning to prove more than they could fulfil, owing to the increasing cost of pulpwood. Your uncle thought that the acquisition of this tract would enable the Adamson people to pull thru with a good profit. Unfortunately your uncle's judgment was bad, and his obstinacy was strong. The Rosny timber rights are practically valueless, because the wood is principally balsam fir instead of pine and spruce."

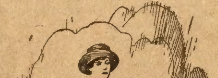
He noted that Hilary only watched him instead of answering, and he began to feel that he would not be disposed of as easily as he had anticipated.

"The property has never begun to pay its way," continued Monsieur Lamartine. "Your uncle paid three hundred and fifty thousand for the cutting rights alone. He found himself up against the law which places a limit on the size of trees. Seven inches for black, or swamp spruce, I believe; twelve for white spruce; twelve or thirteen for pine. And nearly all the trees on the Rosny limits that aren't fir are under the legal size. Your uncle sank half his fortune in it. He was — excuse me — eccentric. I suppose he never bore any grudge against you, Mr. Askew?"

Hilary laughed. "I hope he didn't," he answered. "But my uncle Jonas was, as you say, eccentric. After my father died he made me an offer of a commercial position, and when I declined it he washed his hands of me. After I had completed my forestry course at my own expense he became a little embittered. I had reason to believe that he used his personal influence on one occasion to prevent my obtaining the contract to plant an estate."

The notary nodded. "We may say, then," he suggested, "that Mr. Jonas Askew's legacy was meant to be in the nature of a post-mortem jest. And certainly it was one. This is the case: the timber cannot be cut except at a loss, on account of its sparseness and the high cost of transportation. The balsam fir is too gummy to make any but inferior paper, below the standard even of the newspapers. It occupies the greater portion of the tract, together with second growth birch, which is, of course, of use only for firewood. The expenses are very considerable. There is the labor, and the mill, freight, upkeep charges; and the jobbers who subrent their tracts get their leases practically for a song. In short, Mr. Askew, I cannot advise you to consider your uncle's legacy seriously."

"I'm sorry to hear that," answered Hilary. "But I suppose something can be done with the wood. There are uses besides pulpwood to which the timber can be put?"



A Figure on Horseback Appeared in the Distance.

Monsieur Lamartine drummed his fingers for quite a while before answering.

"A company with a large capital might find it commercially profitable to develop your tract," he said presently. "In such a case it would probably make it's expenses and a little more by the use of its own tugs and barges, work the paying districts of the concession, and, after a few years, let the whole tract revert to the government for taxes. But no man without an ample fortune and a thoro knowledge of lumber conditions in this Province could dream of pulling out even."

Hilary leaned forward in his chair. "Monsieur Lamartine," he said, "I'll tell you how I view this matter. I didn't build any extravagant hopes upon my uncle's legacy. I'm not constructed that way. And I don't particularly care about the financial end, tho of course I'm not above having a use for money. What I want principally is to settle somewhere among trees and do something with them. I'm tired of what I've been doing these past five years.

"I'm tired of hunting a job here and a job there to tend somebody else's trees, and having to make myself agreeable to rich men in order to have them employ me and recommend me to their friends. I'm tired of spending three months in New York, and two weeks in Pennsylvania, and running down to Virginia for a contract that somebody else snatches away from me. Above all, I'm tired of other people's trees. I want my own trees. I want to see them grow up, and thin them out, and have a real forest in bearing.

"So I've decided to take hold of that St. Boniface tract and see what I can make of it. If it's all fir, maybe I'll become the Christmas tree king and sell little firs all thru the country. I'm going to show my uncle, Monsieur Lamartine, that he sized me up wrong."

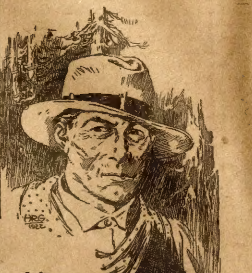
Monsieur Lamartine smiled at his caller's frankness.

"I understand how you feel, Mr. Askew," he said, "and I can put you in the way of doing just what you have suggested. What you want is a nice little tract of a few hundred acres, not far from Quebec. A place with a little trout lake on it, to build your camp beside, ten acres freehold and the rest leased. You'll enjoy that, and"—he paused and scrutinized him with his fox look— "I think I may be able to dispose of the Rosny white elephant for you."

Again Hilary returned no answer, and Monsieur Lamartine could not decide whether it was a sign of strength or of weakness. Still, plausibility, as has been said, was Monsieur Lamartine's strong card. And he was sure that a man who loved trees apart from their commercial value was a dreamer and unpractical—a failure before starting.

"They would pay $45,000, cash," said the notary. "And that would enable you to realize your own aspirations. You are fond of fishing, Mr. Askew?"

Hilary looked up and laughed so frankly that Monsieur Lamartine was quite disconcerted. "I find it difficult to change my plans so swiftly," he said. "I am not to be taken by storm, even in Quebec."



Lafe Connell of Shoeburyport, Mass., U. S. A.

The notary clapped him on the shoulder. "Excellent!" he cried, with false joviality. "But, seriously, think it over. Spend a week here—two weeks. Look about you. Inspect our fine old city, the Ancient Capital. Do you know we are the only walled city on this continent?"

He stopped; perhaps he saw Hilary redden, perhaps his instinct warned him to do so.

"What I want," said Hilary, "is the Rosny tract."

"The offer is too small? I doubt——"

"I will discuss that after I have seen the concession."

The notary sighed. "Well, at least think the matter over for a while," he said. "Mr. Morris, the manager, is away on business. He should be in Quebec tomorrow, and perhaps he can arrange to take you up there."

"I am thinking of going at a very early date," said Hilary, "in fact, by the boat tomorrow."

"Mr. Askew, I assure you your uncle was just as hasty in deciding as yourself. You had better wait for Mr. Morris. He is a man of expert judgment. You cannot have a better adviser, and he has absolutely no personal interest one way or another. Canadian timber cannot be judged by the American standards. There are so many things to consider; and then—you don't speak French, do you?"

"A little."

"It would not help you, anyway. The dialect up at St. Boniface is seventeenth century. They are a wild lot up there, a very bad lot of people; smugglers and poachers, Mr. Askew."

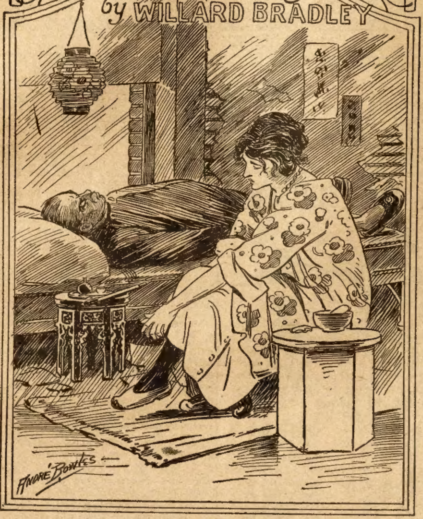
Hilary, who had already sensed Lamartine's objection to his going to St. Boniface, awakened to suspicion at last. "I shall leave on tomorrow morning's boat," he said. "When I have made my decision I shall let you know. I think I shall refuse your company's offer. Will you let me have the papers, Monsieur Lamartine, including the last half-yearly statement and the map of the limits?"

"My dear sir, it will be three months

(Continued on Page 16.)

The Burning Rivet

by WILLARD BRADLEY



Annie, Frail, Unfortunate Creature, Sat Watching Him.

CHINATOWN slept in the somnolence of spring. Here and there one caught glimpses of an almond-eyed brother squatted on the doorstep of his domicile, stealing a few precious minutes away from a sudsy washboard or white-hot stove to enjoy his afternoon pipe in supreme gratification. The pungent smell of steaming chop suey wafted on the faint breeze, and met ones olfactory nerves with a pleasant sting; and opposite the Twenty-Four Hour Mission, Tom Sing's be-whiskered Maltese basked in a shaft of warm sunlight, a welcome intruder in a glum, gloomy alleyway.

All was still, save for the periodic rumblings of a passing "L" train and the din from the hydraulic drills which were used in constructing a skeleton-like shaped viaduct, high over Chatham Square. Up there, a tan-faced, fennec-eared son of Erin sang ditties of his native land in a rich, tenor voice, as he toasted rivets over an acetylene flame and then tossed them with a rasping whoop down a long, chute-like strip of tin to an olive-skinned Sicilian, forty feet down. Occasionally, one would miss its mark and fall, a miniature pink meteor, into the blackened gutter of the Bowery below.

In Mulberry Bend, a veritable army of birds, fresh from the Blue Ridge, twittered in the trees; and on a fence hard by was stretched a 24-sheet litho, done in all the colors of the rainbow, that announced the coming to town of "The Greatest Show on Earth." Around the corner, in Mott street, a dozen Italian pygmies were strenuously engaged in a vest-pocket edition of the all-absorbing pastime called the National Game. Horsehide struck wagon-tongue and windows were smashed, and right under the very eyes of peg-post Officer Moynihan at that! For Moynihan, at that particular moment, was concentrating his efforts in endeavoring to "make a date" for the following night with a certain little Messina miss, who had smiled at him thrice during the past forty minutes from her harem three stories above the street.

Surely, it was spring!

Annie Ragan knew it. She could feel it in her very bones, doped and drink-sodden as they were. She wanted to go out—anywhere, and drink in the invigorating air. But there was Mock Lee!

Mock was Annie's yellow husband. Ever since that storm-driven night six years ago, when Mock had resurrected her from the streets and made her his wife, his word had been law. She had never disobeyed him. She dared not.

One of Mock's most stringent commands was that she should never go out unless he accompanied her. He was asleep now on a battered, bug-ridden cot by the open window. He had taken a few more whiffs of hop that were good for him, and at the earliest, could not awake before nightfall.

She wanted to go out. The poetry in her rotten soul, vague as it was, was rising to the surface. Spring was calling her! The pipes of Pan had struck a clarion note in her scavenger breast, and were enticing her, urging her on!

Mock, bulk of raw meat that he was with his bloated face and sparse, mouse-colored hair, slept steadily. The noise from the drills directly above the window did not annoy him in the least. In the parlance of the Ghetto, he was "dead to the world."

Annie, frail, unfortunate creature, sat watching him, munching a bit of rice cake. Spring was calling her. She wanted to go out. But she was afraid of Mock. If he awoke during her absence there would be h—l to pay. He would wait and wait until she returned, and just as sure as they burned incense in the Joss House around the corner, he would kill her! Annie knew it. Scores of scars that marked her miserable body had been inflicted by Mock for less serious causes than that. She shuddered.

Tears welled from the dissipation-betraying things she called eyes. She was a coward, a scurvy, cringing coward—afraid of a yellow, bulking bully she called husband! Her tousled head fell to the warped hardwood table with a nauseating thud and she sobbed as a child after having a leathern cat-o'-nine-tails applied to its spine by an over-exacting parent. She was a coward!

Spring was calling her! A train of pixies, carrying a daisy chain, seemed to enter thru the sun-flooded window; pranced dapperly about the gloomy room, and then danced out again. From afar they seemed to beckon her. Spring was calling her.

Annie tossed the uneaten bit of rice cake bitterly to the uncarpeted floor, and grabbed a ragged shawl from a worm-eaten rack above her head. Wrapping it about her semi-bent shoulders, she cast a hurried look at the sleeping bulk—a look of supreme abhorrence—then darted out of the bleak, ill-smelling hole she called "home," for a few hours of freedom! As she moved, she endeavored to gather her thoughts, the wild, flighty thoughts of a hop fiend and a drunkard. She wondered and pondered as to what she should do next, like a friendless convict after his release from a long prison term. She had it, she would go to Mulberry Bend Park and watch the Italian kiddies at their play, and drink in the winesap air.

As she ran down the rickety steps leading to the street, darkened by the blanketing shadow of the "L" structure overhead, a train passing by loomed, to her half-crazed mind, like a gigantic buzzard swooping down upon her. Then the thought that Mock might awake while she was out, entered her mind and chilled her spine; but only for an instant.

She had now reached the open street, and was inhaling deep draughts of the intoxicating, exhilarating April air. She darted down the dreary thorofare that is celebrated in both song and story, and turned into sun-washed Doyer street.

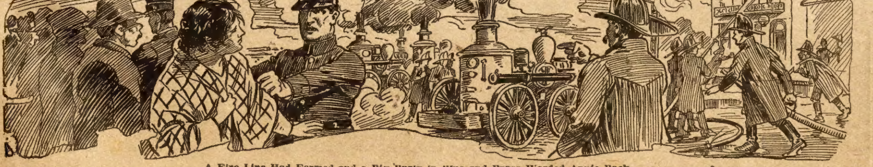
Just as she rounded the corner, she ran into the very counterpart of Mock, a veritable facsimile of the man she loathed. She trembled, poor degenerate that she was, but breathed a sigh of relief when, upon looking back over her shoulder to see if the Celestial were following her, she discovered he was nowhere in sight. Mock's double had disappeared as if the ground had opened up and swallowed him. "All chinks and coons look alike, anyway!" she consoled herself, and continued on her happy, romping way.

The yellow, piercing sunlight, the first she had seen in the open for weeks, shone full in her face as she moved and made her blink. Until she became accustomed to it, she shaded her eyes with her hand, and groped semi-staggeringly along that fantastic, mottled way. Nearing the outskirts of the Italian Quarter, she began to hum some old, half-forgotten tune. Unmusical tho it was, it depicted the buoyancy of her spirit at that particular moment, and she surprised more than one matter-of-fact pigtail that she passed.

Her heart leaped for joy as she neared her destination. Mulberry Bend Park was filled with children and the ring of their happy, care-free voices. High in the air, in the center of the generous tract, Old Glory, attached to a white-washed pole, shone in all its glad resplendence, as it fluttered in the soft, balmy breeze. The fires of spring burned in Annie Ragan's derelict soul; and for the first time in years, she felt almost happy.

She selected a seat on a bench which was enjoying the splendor of a recently applied coat of green paint and began to drink in everything about her. Next to her sat an old Florentine with the gout, and next to him, a little Madonna of the slums hugged and squeezed and pinched her first born.

Directly opposite her, in the middle of the roadway, a little knot of kiddies were playing ring-a-round-a-rosey. Suddenly, like an arrow shot from a taut bow, a large touring car came steaming along, headed direct for the circle of children. As the auto neared them, Annie's heart fluttered and she shrieked wildly to the tots to move. At her command, they scattered like geese in a country road, and she was glad. The maternal, mothering instinct that had been stifled long ago, was resurrected and



A Fire Line Had Formed and a Big Burly in Blue and Brass Warded Annie Back.

reasserted itself, strongly, within her.

Annie turned and gazed at the pink ball in the little Madonna's arms. She yearned to pinch its little feet, but she was afraid that her action would be resented; for Annie was of a supersensitive nature. Just now she did not have the appearance of a gentlewoman, so she refrained from touching the babe. However, she took pleasure in watching it as it squirmed about in its mother's arms. Soon she fell to dreaming of things that might have been.

In Chinatown all was still, save for the periodic rumblings of a passing "L" train and the din from hydraulic drills which were used in constructing a skeleton-like shaped viaduct, high over Chatham Square. Up there, a tan-faced, fennec-eared son of Erin sang ditties of his native land in a rich tenor voice, as he toasted rivets over an acetylene flame, and then tossed them with a rasping whoop down a long, chute-like strip of tin to an olive-skinned Sicilian, forty feet below. Occasionally, one would miss its mark.

Annie fell to dreaming about things that might have been.

Her thoughts wandered back a decade before, and in her mind's eye she viewed the things that had happened then, just as if she were watching them enacted before her on a moving picture screen.

IN A little tank town in the western part of New York State, she had lived alone with her daddy, who was a recluse. After supper, it was customary for her to walk down to the village, a distance of about two miles, to the little postoffice for the evening mail. On the evening in question, she tendered her box number and was told there was nothing for her.

On the way out, she paused for a moment to glance over the stock of illustrated postcards displayed on a rack near the door. She happened upon one that struck her as being quite funny, and she left the postoffice in an extremely happy frame of mind.

A yellow touring car of foreign manufacture lay by the curb, snorting and belching steam like some giant monster of the Stone Age at bay. Not being in any particular hurry to commence her two-mile jaunt over the hill, Annie stood and gaped at the deserted auto. Being fifteen, Annie was privileged to do as she pleased.

She was taken more with its blatant blend than with the car itself. Besides, motor cars were quite a rarity in that part of the country at the time; so Annie—Annie, the unsophisticated and uninitiated—looked upon one very much as she would upon the bearded lady at the circus.

Presently, the monster's owner returned. He was a dapper, good-looking chappie, and his clothes and smile bespoke the prosperity he was evidently enjoying. Besides, the Flor de Rina he sported in his mouth was held together with a red-and-gold band. Taking him all in all, he looked much like the gentleman heroes she had read about in the family story papers.

Espying the innocent eying his "baby," the dapper gentleman asked Annie if she would like to take a ride in "it." Annie said, simply, that she would. And so it happened.

Four years later found Annie, friendless and alone, wandering about the maze-like streets of the metropolis during the throes of a midsummer storm. A hereditary fear of lightning had driven her into an inviting doorway off Astor Place—and it was there that Mock had found her.

Mock! The very name mocked her.

When that saffron-hued mongrel took her in, she was contemplating a jump in the East River or a swallow of something that did not taste too bitter, but she had lacked the courage. Rather than face such a fearful fate, she had consented to become the wife of something she placed on an equal footing with a snake. Mock had been lenient, considering all things. He had introduced her to the supreme pacifier, Hop, which Annie resorted to every time her conscience stung her, and that was often.

Suddenly, the old Florentine with the gout became uneasy and began to move restlessly about in the cramped space the municipality allots to one person. Annie looked at him. He reminded her of her father, who, she thought, was alone and uncared for, up there in the wilderness. Soon she became conscious that her eyes were wet. She dried them on her tattered sleeve, then, so as not to attract the inquisitive glare of the other occupants of the bench, she stifled the sob that swelled from her heart. A whiff of hop would have helped her now!

"Poor old daddy!" she thought. For the past five Thanksgivings, he had inserted a four-line "Personal" in one of the Park Row yellows, beseeching her to come home. She would have returned and braved the wagging tongues of the scores of Mrs. Grundys that abound in a town that boasts a population of only eight hundred—were it not for Mock. And the fare was only four seventy-eight!

The disc, that two hours before had been the color of molten yellow, was now a circle of blood-red cardinal. Slowly, it sank into its gigantic groove beyond the horizon; and then could be seen no more. With the advent of nightfall, the fresh-air fiends had left the park, and Annie was alone.

The clock a-top the New York Life Building struck six, and Annie wondered what Mock was doing. Perhaps he was still asleep. If he were, it was possible for her to return without his being the wiser regarding her brief vacation. But suppose he had awakened during her absence? She trembled like a condemned procurer awaiting the assassin's ax. Her heart sank and grew frigid.

Her musings were interrupted by the clanging of the bells and the shrilling of the sirens on a dozen fire engines. They rolled madly toward Chinatown. The sky for miles around had become tinged with a pinkish glow and flared with the united force of a dozen sunsets, blotting out the stars. The sight enthralled her. Fascinated, she left the park and followed the flame, like a desert-thirsty man pursuing a mirage. As she moved, her shawl fluttered in the wind; her heart fluttered also.

Presently she arrived at Doyer street and the Bowery. Here, pandemonium reigned. The engines chugged and spat burning cinders out of their bottle-shaped funnels, and the fire chiefs shouted commands to their nervy underlings. A fire line had formed and a big burly in blue and brass warded Annie back. She crossed the gutter, drenched with water sprayed from a score of nozzles, and then took her place amidst a labyrinth of craned necks.

She was swept off her feet by a veritable paroxysm of joy, and jumped up and down, clapping her hands, very much like a little lady of six after receiving her first lollypop. The very house she had emerged from earlier in the afternoon was in flames, and Mock, the yellow rodent she feared, was being roasted alive! The spell was broken!

A broken-nosed gent standing next to her nudged a cauliflower-eared friend of his. Indicating Annie, he spoke a solitary word: "Nuts!" Annie heard him, but gave no head. What cared she what they branded her now? She was free, free, FREE!

Over the heads of the curious, she caught a glimpse of three bronzed balls glittering red upon catching the reflection of the tongues of flame that licked out of the burning shack directly opposite. She pondered for a second, and then exclaimed, aloud, "I have it!" The embryo alienist with the broken nose overheard, and was at once convinced of the veracity of his statement of the moment before. He repeated the words to his scavenger companion and thought, with the wisdom of his kind, that he understood. The other winked; he, too, thought that he understood.

Annie pushed thru the mob and entered a door beneath the three balls. Inside, she removed the gold circlet that Mock had tendered on the night of their wedding, and all but flung it to the wizened Jew behind the counter. Ikey picked it up, shut one eye and examined the ring carefully.

"How much you vant?" he asked.

"Four seventy-eight!" said Annie. "And never mind the ticket!"

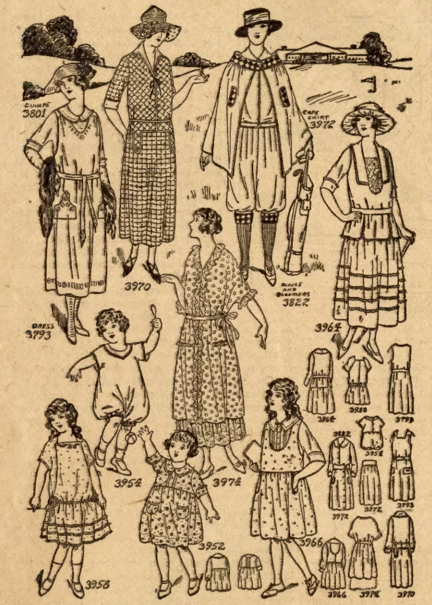
* * *

On to Him.

"I promised to make a call tonight," said her husband as he started off.

"Very well, dear," said his wife. "But don't call unless you have the cards."

NEW LEDGER PATTERNS



Nos. 3801-3793.—A Chic and Charming Design. Guimpe 3801 cut in 7 sizes: 34, 36, 38, 40, 42, 44 and 46 inches bust measure. Dress 3793, but in 8 sizes: 34, 36, 38, 40, 42, 44, 46 and 48 inches bust measure. A 38-inch size requires 2⅝ yards of 36-inch material for the guimpe, and 3⅝ yards for the dress, of 40-inch material. The width at the foot is about 2 yards. Two separate patterns. 12 cents for each pattern.

No. 3970.—Ladies House Dress. Cut in 7 sizes: 34, 36, 38, 40, 42, 44 and 46 inches bust measure. A 38-inch size requires 4⅜ yards of 40-inch material. The width at the foot is about 2 yards. Price 12 cents.

Nos. 3972-3822.—Ladies' "Knicker" Suit. Skirt 3972 cut in 6 sizes: 25, 27, 29, 31, 33 and 35 inches waist measure. Blouse and knickers 3822 cut in 7 sizes: 34, 36, 38, 40, 42, 44 and 46 inches bust measure. It will require 2¼ yards of 36-inch material for the blouse and 2⅝ yards for the "knickers;" for the skirt 3¾ yards of 44-inch material will be required; to make this "outfit" for a medium size. The width of the skirt is about 2¾ yards. Two separate patterns. 12 cents for each pattern.

No. 3964.—Misses' Dress. Cut in 3 sizes: 16, 18 and 20 years. An 18-year size requires 5 yards of 40-inch material. The width of the skirt at the foot is 2 yards. Price 12 cents.

No. 3954.—Child's Romper. Cut in 5 sizes: 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 years. A 2-year size requires 2⅝ yards of 27-inch material. Price 12 cents.

No. 3974.—Morning Negligee. Cut in 4 sizes: Small, 34-36; medium, 36-40; large, 42-44; extra large, 46-48 inches bust measure. A medium size requires 3⅞ yards of 40-inch material. The width at the foot is 2⅛ yards. Price 12 cents.

No. 3958.—Girls' Dress. Cut in 4 sizes: 4, 6, 8 and 10 years. A 6-year size requires 3 yards of 36-inch material. Price 12 cents.

No. 3952.—Child's Dress. Cut in 4 sizes: 1, 2, 4 and 5 years. A 2-year size requires 2⅜ yards of 27-inch material. Price 12 cents.

No. 3966.—Girls' Dress. Cut in 4 sizes: 6, 8, 10 and 12 years. A 10-year size requires 2 yards for the guimpe and 2¾ yards for the dress of material 27 inches wide. Price 12 cents.

ORDER BLANK FOR LEDGER PATTERNS.

Please note carefully the new address of Ledger Pattern Service.

Chicago Ledger Pattern Dept., 7057 Jeffery Ave., Chicago, Ill.
Inclosed find........... Send me the Patterns listed below:
Pattern number .... Size .... Price 12 cents.
Pattern number .... Size .... Price 12 cents.
Name ....
Street or P. O. Box..............................
Town.............................. State..............
Inclose stamps or coin (each pattern is 12 cents). Wrap coins carefully.

Ledger Embroidery Patterns

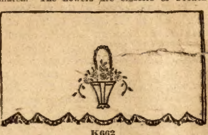
By Helen Kaufman

Dainty Baskets for Applique Work.

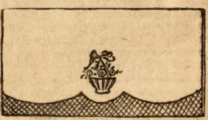
BASKETS of applique combined with embroidered flowers are most popular this season. Guest towels with baskets of colored chambray are effective and decorative, with little work.

No. K661 has a deep hem of blue and white checked gingham, with the basket of plain blue to match. The heavy lines and handle are worked solid of darker blue, 6 strand cotton is used for all this work. The bow knot and streamers were embroidered solid of pale blue. The flowers of yellow, rose and lavender French knots, with light green leaves, complete this attractive towel. One small skein of each shade will be ample for working the three towels.

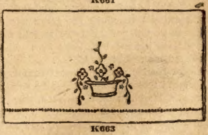
No. K662 has an edge of irregular scallops, finished with lace. The basket of tan chambray, was outlined in brown with handle to match. The flowers are clusters of French knots, each flower of one shade. Light and dark rose, blue, lavender and yellow, were used with light green leaves. Crocheted, knitted or tatted lace can be used.



K662



K661



K663

No. K663 has a hemstitched hem. The low basket of blue chambray has three large flowers of rose, orchid and yellow chambray. The smaller flowers are embroidered in the same colors. A cluster of French knots forming each flower. Use six threads in the needle at once, wind once around the needle for each knot. The centers of the appliqued flowers have yellow French knots. The small flowers are blind stitched to the towel, giving the affect of having fallen there.

Note: Perforated patterns, including compound and directions for stamping may be had by sending 12c for each pattern or the 3 patterns for 25c. K661, K662, K663.

ORDER BLANK FOR EMBROIDERY PATTERNS.

Ledger Embroidery Pattern Dept.,
208 S. Franklin St., Chicago, Ill.
Inclosed find........................ Send me
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State ....
Inclose stamps, money order or coin. Wrap coins carefully.

A Page for the Woman in the Home

VICTORIA GREY'S TALKS TO WOMEN

FIVE thousand years B. C., in Egypt, saw two lovers. And because they were two real lovers, we have discovered a great scientific fact, a gigantic fact concerning the behavior and movements of our planet, the Earth.

Imagine a slim, straight young prince with intense blue eyes, a fine nose and chin—and lips, virile but sensitive. Imagine a barbaric magpie of a princess with the unmistakable traits of the Gallic Tribe: wild, untamed, cold—yet for all that, ardent. The annals of the prince say he "caught the wild thing." There was a great wedding ceremony for them. It was the night of the ceremony. All the nobility of the realm were invited. The hours waxed late and still the revelry was going on, and the young prince and the imported piece who had become his bride—the prince and his princess—escaped into the night to watch the moon, great shield that it was, pour its golden light thru the palm leaves, sharply silhouetted against it and the sky.

There the dear, foolish things swore they would find some measure that would measure their love into everlastingness, that is, lasting beyond their deaths.

"You see yon North Star, which is called Alpha Draconis?" the prince asked his wild bride. "That, my Lotus Blossom, never moves from its appointed point in the sky. The hours wane, and all the stars wheel about and pass out of our sight, but Alpha Draconis, our North Star never sets, never wheels, but glows steadily down, from its appointed place in the sky."

"It shines into the camp of my father in the same way," answered the princess.

They shivered with the giganticness of the thought, and leaned close, and pressed their cheeks together; and the night air brought perfumes from the moon to their nostrils and the leaves of the palms seemed to ripple a heavenly "ah" above them.

Presently the prince's eyes scrutinized the horizon.

"What do you see yonder, the farthest left?" he asked in whispered tones.

"The pyramid your father has built for you and all of yours, so that when the god and goddess Isis and Osiris are ready, our bodies may be laid in the pyramid, so that our souls may come to visit our bodies from the Great Beyond across the sacred River Styx."

"That is true, my Moon Flame. Come with me to the pyramid and you shall see what I have done to its wall for your and my sake. It is far, but the moon is fair and love lends strength, so we shall steal out there now."

So, arm over shoulder and arm about waist they strolled thru the golden mist of the moon and the violet shadows to the far pyramid. Once the lever of the great stone door was touched and the huge disk rolled aside, they entered the great, cold, vaulted spaces and the prince lighted the tapers in the sconces. Great marble throne-chairs stood in conspicuous places. Soft leopard skins strewed the floors and padded the walls; huge golden incense burners danced in the sparkling lights of the tapers. But the strangest thing of all, and that for which the prince had brought the princess, was a little bowl riveted to a niche in the sloping wall. The princess ran to it. "It is full of liquid silver," she exclaimed, "and there's a bright star, right in the heart of it."

"It is a bowl of quick silver, my vibrant Palm Branch," the prince explained. "And as for the bright little star you see reflected in it—place your eye down here! Can you see up the fine, narrow passage, no larger around than your little finger but long enough to traverse the thick walls of the pyramid? It is as tho some fay had pierced our wall with a giant needle. I had it done so that our mighty North Star, Alpha Draconis, could shine straight down thru it and into this bowl of mercury. It will always shine into this bowl of mercury, my dove, for it alone, of all the stars, never shifts its place in the firmament. Now look at the tablet engraved beside the bowl."

The princess, crouching close to him, read:

"Oh, mighty North Star, Oh Alpha Draconis, just as long as thy rays are

(Continued on Page 13.)

AN IDEA FOR SUNDAY'S THREE MEALS

BREAKFAST.

Grapefruit
Cereal and Cream
Scrambled Eggs
Toast Coffee or Milk

DINNER.

Roast Lamb Boiled Potatoes
Green Peas
Corn on the Cob
Huckleberry Ice Cream

SUPPER.

Crab Meat Salad
Bread and Butter
Lemonade Cookies

Clover Rolls.

Make balls about three-quarters of an inch in diameter, and place three in each buttered muffin pan. Let them rise, and bake. They will be fastened together, suggesting a clover leaf.

Huckleberry Ice Cream.

Mix one cupful of sugar with four cupfuls of cream and a teaspoonful of vanilla. Freeze for fifteen minutes, then stir in a quart of huckleberries and let stand in the freezer for an hour without stirring.

Crabs.

Crabs are in season again and the lover of their sweet and tender meat should be in his element. They are not expensive and they are easy to prepare and there are dozens of good ways to cook them. Choose a crab for its weight. One proportionately light is watery and not so good as a heavier one.

DOMESTIC HINTS FOR THE HOUS_WIFE

SIMPLE SOUPS FOR SUMMER

SOUPS have a big and important part in the summer menu. But we usually crave different soups in summer. For a summer dinner a clear soup, served piping hot, is a good choice, or one of the lighter cream vegetable soups when the rest of the meal is not going to be very heavy. But the rich soups, like mulligatawney and some of the French purees, are best left until cooler weather.

A vegetable soup of a moderately substantial, but not too rich, variety is a good choice for the warm day luncheon. This may be a cream vegetable soup, or a good concoction of left-over vegetables, simmer slowly and for a long time, and carefully seasoned.

Rice soup is an excellent summer soup for dinner, as it is not heavy or rich. The rice water called for is that in which rice has been boiled.

Rice Soup.

3 cups rice water.
2 cups carrots.
2 tablespoons drippings.
1 tablespoon chopped onion.
1 tablespoon chopped celery.
1 tablespoon flour.

Scrape the carrots, cut in small pieces and cook until tender. Heat the drippings, add the onions and celery to it and cook them five minutes without browning. Stir in the flour, add this mixture to the carrots, add the rice water, with salt and pepper to taste.

Here is a recipe for a quick tomato puree delicious for a summer luncheon:

Tomato Puree.

1 sliced onion.
½ of a bay leaf.
Pinch of soda.
1 sprig of parsley.
4 cups of tomatoes.
2 cups of hot water.
2 teaspoons of sugar.
2 tablespoons of butter.
¼ teaspoon of cloves.
¼ teaspoon of allspice.
3 tablespoons of flour.
2 or 3 drops of onion extract.
Salt and pepper to taste.

Brown the onion in the butter, add the flour and brown. Add the tomatoes, parsley, spices, bay leaf and sugar; simmer fifteen minutes. Strain the soup thru a puree sieve, and return to the kettle. Dissolve the soda in a little warm water, add it to the soup, season to taste, and serve.

THE RIGHT THING AT THE RIGHT TIME

PICNIC MANNERS

PICNIC meals are sure to be an excuse for dispensing with some of the accepted forms of table manners, but this does not mean that one needs no manners at all on a picnic. The fact is that the person careless of manners is usually more of a nuisance on a picnic than anywhere else.

And remember this—the hostess who has provided the spread is the one to set the lead in table manners. That is, if she has brought knives, forks, spoons and other accessories of civilized eating with her it is bad form for any guest to indulge in the sort of picnic manners that are in order when such conveniences are dispensed with. Yet you may have met on picnics the sort of young man or woman who pushes aside proffered forks and spoons: "Say, I thought this was a regular picnic," he says, and then proceeds to eat tomatoes out of hand and stir his coffee with a stick.

The calibre of a man's chivalry shows itself at a picnic as well as anywhere else. Sometimes the man who passes as a gentleman at a dance or card party shows himself decidedly lacking in courteousness and the rudiments of good breeding at a picnic. This is because the veneer of good manners is somewhat cast aside at a picnic and we have a chance to see what is or is not beneath.

Remember that the man who shirks in carrying baskets and bundles, sits idly while the other men are fetching wood for the camp fire, or make the oven from stones, is showing just as much lack of consideration for the women present as the man who fails to assist his companion over fences and streams or starts eating before the women have been served.

What Your Name Signifies

Facts about it; its history; its meaning; whence it was derived; your lucky day and lucky jewel.

BY MILDRED MARSHALL

FANNY

FANNY, which was originally considered a diminutive of Frances, has become sufficiently an individual entity to be regarded as a separate name entirely. Its origin is in reality very complicated as it is one of a dozen dissimilar names that come from the Frey of Teutonic mythology.

Freya was the goddess of love, but she likewise drives over the battlefields in her car drawn by cats and chooses half the slain whom she escorts to their seats at the banquet of Valhalla.

The modern Fanny is apparently of the days of Queen Anne, coming into notice with the beautiful Lady Fanny Shirley, who made it a great favorite and almost a proverb for prettiness and simplicity, so that the wits of George II.'s time called John, Lord Hervey, "Lord Fanny" for his effeminacy. Fanny is often given at baptism instead of the full name, Frances, and by an odd caprice, it has lately been adopted in both France and Germany instead of their national contractions.

One poet, doubtless seeking to celebrate the beauty of the lovely Lady Shirley, wrote a "Song to Fanny," which has lyrical charm:

"Nature, thy fair and smiling face
Has now a double power to bless;
For 'tis the glass in which I trace
My absent Fanny's loveliness.

Her heavenly eyes above me shine,
The rose reflects her modest blush,
She breathes in every eglantine,
She sings in every warbling thrush.

That her dear form alone I see,
Need not excite surprise in any;
For Fanny's all the world to me,
And all the world to me is Fanny."

Fanny's jewel is the wondrously lovely fire-opal. The restless colors of the ordinary opal is far surpassed by the fire-opal whose mysterious depths are shot with flame. The stone is perhaps the only one which superstition regards as unlucky except in cases of persons born in October. Legend has it that a pixie clad in brilliant colors has been imprisoned in the stone; he moves restlessly about seeking egress but only human tears can melt the gem and give him freedom, so he contrives all manner of mischief for the wearer to bring about that end. Fanny's lucky day is Friday and 3 is her mystic number.

Next Week: CLAUDIA. Watch for It.

Other departments of interest to woman and her children will be found on pages 2, 6 and 26

In Which Jane Withersteen and Bishop Dyer Have a Talk.

Riders of the Purple Sage

By Zane Grey

Told in Last Week's Installment

Everywhere along the cliffs that encircled beautiful Surprise Valley Venters observed signs undoubtedly left by ancient tribes of cliff-dwellers. While he and his fair companion feasted on rabbits, quail, partridge and other game, Bess declared she had a dim recollection of having lived in some other place than Deception Pass, a place where there were women and children. She could read and write, she said. Oldring had taught her.

Oldring was more than a cattle rustler, she went on to explain. There was gold, in great quantities, in the canyons. The Mormons, she believed, had stolen Miss Withersteen's red herd, but Oldring, thru a deal, had made the trick possible. The Mormons had been represented in the deal by

JERRY CARD, one of their number, but Venters still believed Elder Tull was behind it all. Venters then began to bring in live calves from the Pass meadows. One he slaughtered for meat. Seven more he installed in the cavern, temporarily. All were red calves. He concluded they were from Jane Withersteen's stolen herd. He and Bess now had a good supply of young beef. They had tired of rabbit and quail.

On being asked her wish—whether she preferred to go away or stay in the cliffs with himself—she very promptly replied, "Stay!" Then Venters knew she loved him.

This story began in No. 26, the Ledger for July 1. Back copies may be obtained from our agents or newsdealers.

CHAPTER XI.

FAITH AND UNFAITH.

AT JANE WITHERSTEEN'S home the promise made to Mrs. Larkin to care for little Fay had begun to be fulfilled. Like a gleam of sunlight thru the cottonwoods was the coming of the child to the gloomy house of Withersteen. The big, silent halls echoed with childish laughter. In the shady court, where Jane spent many of the hot July days, Fay's tiny feet pattered over the stone flags and splashed in the amber stream. She prattled incessantly.

What difference, Jane thought, a child made in her home! It has never been a real home, she discovered. Even the tidiness and neatness she had observed, and upon which she had insisted to her women, became, in the light of Fay's smile, habits that now lost their importance. Fay littered the court with Jane's books and papers, and other toys her fancy improvised, and many a strange craft went floating down the little brook.

And it was owing to Fay's presence that Jane Withersteen came to see more of Lassiter. The rider had for the most part kept to the sage. He rode for her, but he did not seek her except on business; and Jane had to acknowledge in pique that her overtures had been made in vain. Fay, however, captured Lassiter the moment he first laid eyes on her.

Jane was present at the meeting, and there was something about it which dimmed her sight and softened her toward this foe of her people. The rider had clanked into the court, a tired yet wary man, always looking for the attack upon him that was inevitable and might come from any quarter; and he had walked right upon little Fay. The child had been beautiful even in her rags and amid the surroundings of the hovel in the sage; but now, in a pretty white dress, with her shining curls brushed and her face clean and rosy, she was lovely. She left her play and looked up at Lassiter.

If there was not an instinct for all three of them in that meeting, an unreasoning tendency toward a closer intimacy, then Jane Withersteen believed she had been subject to a queer fancy. She imagined any child would have feared Lassiter. And Fay Larkin had been a lonely, a solitary elf of the sage, not at all an ordinary child, and exquisitely shy with strangers. She watched Lassiter with great, round, grave eyes, but showed no fear.

The rider gave Jane a favorable report of cattle and horses; and as he took the seat to which she invited him, little Fay edged as much as half an inch nearer. Jane replied to his look of inquiry and told Fay's story. The rider's gray, earnest gaze troubled her. Then he turned to Fay and smiled in a way that made Jane doubt her sense of the true relation of things. How could Lassiter smile so at a child when he had made so many children fatherless? But he did smile, and to the gentleness she had seen a few times, he added something that was infinitely sad and sweet.

Jane's intuition told her that Lassiter had never been a father; but if life ever so blessed him he would be a good one. Fay, also, must have found that smile singularly winning. For she edged closer and closer, and then by way of feminine capitulation, went to Jane, from whose side she bent a beautiful glance upon the rider.

Lassiter only smiled at her.

Jane watched them, and realized that now was the moment she should seize, if she was ever to win this man from his hatred. But the step was not easy to take. The more she saw of Lassiter the more she respected him, and the greater her respect the harder it became to lend herself to mere coquetry. Yet as she thought of her great motive, of Tull, and of that other whose name she had schooled herself never to think of in connection with Milly Erne's avenger, she suddenly found she had no choice. And her creed gave her boldness far beyond the limit to which vanity would have led her.

"Lassiter, I see so little of you now," she said, and was conscious of heat in her cheeks.

"I've been ridin' hard," he replied.

"But you can't live in the saddle. You come in sometimes. Wont you come here to see me—oftener?"

"Is that an order?"

"Nonsense! I simply ask you to come to see me when you find time."

"Why?"

The query once heard was not so embarrassing to Jane as she might have imagined. Moreover, it established in her mind a fact that there existed actually other than selfish reasons for her wanting to see him. And as she had been bold, so she determined to be both honest and brave.

"I've reasons—only one of which I need mention," she answered. "If it's possible I want to change you toward my people. And on the moment I can conceive of little I wouldn't do to gain that end."

How much better and freer Jane felt after that confession! She meant to show him that there was one Mormon who could play a game or wage a fight in the open.

"I reckon," said Lassiter, and he laughed.

It was the best in her, if the most irritating, that Lassiter always aroused.

"Will you come?" She looked into his eyes, and for the life of her could not quite subdue an imperiousness that rose with her spirit. "I never asked so much of any man—except Bern Venters."

"'Pears to me that you'd run no risk, or Venters either. But mebbe that doesn't hold good for me."

"You mean it wouldn't be safe for you to be often here? You look for ambush in the cottonwoods?"

"Not that so much."

At this juncture little Fay sidled over to Lassiter.

"Has oo a little dirl?" she inquired.

"No, lassie," replied the rider.

Whatever Fay seemed to be searching for in Lassiter's sun-reddened face and quiet eyes she evidently found. "Oo tan tum to see me," she added, and with that, shyness gave place to friendly curiosity. First his sombrero with its leather band and silver ornaments commanded her attention; next his quirt, and then the clinking, silver spurs. These held her for some time, but presently, true to childish fickleness, she left off playing with them to look for something else. She laughed with glee as she ran her little hands down the slippery, shiny surface of Lassiter's leather chaps.

Soon she discovered one of the hanging gun-sheaths, and she dragged it up and began tugging at the huge black handle of the gun. Jane Withersteen repressed an exclamation. What significance there was to her in the little girl's efforts to dislodge that heavy weapon! Jane Withersteen saw Fay's play and her beauty and her love as most powerful allies to her own woman's part in a game that suddenly had acquired zest and a hint of danger. And as for the rider, he appeared to have forgotten Jane in the wonder of this lovely child playing about him.

At first he was much the shyer of the two. Gradually her confidence overcame his backwardness, and he had the temerity to stroke her golden curls with a great hand. Fay rewarded his boldness with a smile, and when he had gone to the extreme of closing that great hand over her little brown one, she said, simply: "I like oo!"

Sight of his face then made Jane obvious for the time to his character as a hater of Mormons. Out of the mother longing that swelled her breast she divined the child hunger in Lassiter.

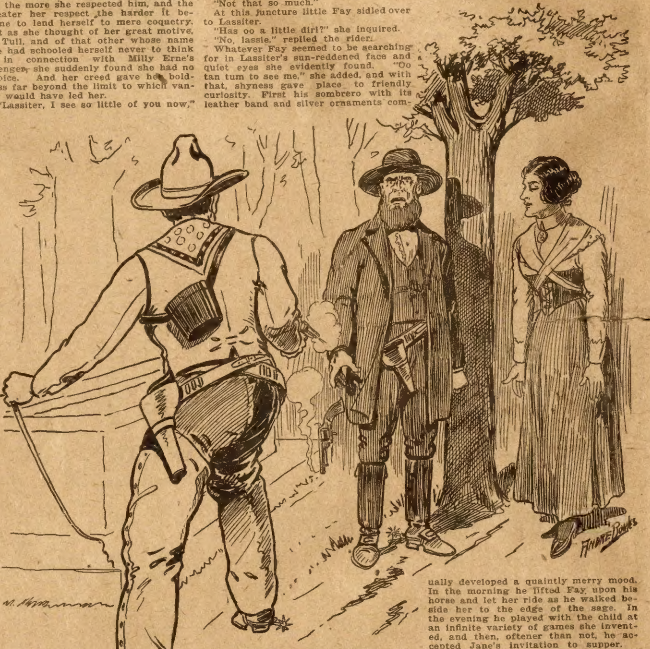
He returned the next day, and the next, and upon the following he came both at morning and at night. Upon the evening of the fourth day Jane seemed to feel the breaking of a brooding struggle in Lassiter. During all these visits he had scarcely a word to say, tho he watched her and played absent-mindedly with Fay. Jane had contented herself with silence. Soon little Fay substituted for the expression of regard "I like oo," a warmer and more generous one, "I love oo."

Thereafter Lassiter came oftener to see Jane and her little protegee. Daily he grew more gentle and kind, and gradually developed a quaintly merry mood. In the morning he lifted Fay upon his horse and let her ride as he walked beside her to the edge of the sage. In the evening he played with the child at an infinite variety of games she invented, and then, oftener than not, he accepted Jane's invitation to supper.

No other visitor came to Withersteen House during those days. So that in spite of watchfulness he never forgot, Lassiter began to show he felt at home there. After the meal they walked into the grove of cottonwoods or up by the lakes, and little Fay held Lassiter's hand as much as she held Jane's. Thus a strange relationship was established, and Jane liked it. At twilight they always returned to the house, where Fay kissed them and went into her mother. Lassiter and Jane were left alone.

Then, if there were anything that a good woman could do to win a man and still preserve her self-respect, it was something which escaped the natural subtlety of a woman determined to allure. Jane's vanity, that after all was not great, was soon satisfied with Lassiter's silent admiration. And her honest desire to lead him from his dark, blood-stained path would never have blinded her to what she owed herself. But the driving passion of her religion, and its call to save Mormons' lives, one life in particular, bore Jane Withersteen close to an infringement of her womanhood.

In the beginning she had reasoned that her appeal to Lassiter must be thru the senses. With whatever means she possessed in the way of adornment she enhanced her beauty. And she stooped



In Jane's Ears Burst a Thundering Report.

to artifices that she knew unworthy of her, but which she deliberately chose to employ. She made of herself a girl in every variable mood wherein a girl might be desirable. In those moods she was not above the methods of an inexperienced tho natural flirt.

She kept close to him whenever opportunity afforded; and she was forever playfully, yet passionately underneath the surface, fighting him for possession of the great black guns. These he would never yield to her. And so in that manner their hands were often and long in contact. The more simplicity that she sensed in him the greater the advantage she took.

She had a trick of changing—and it was not altogether voluntarily—from this gay, thoughtless, girlish coquettishness to the silence and the brooding, burning mystery of a woman's mood. The strength and passion and fire of her were in her eyes, and she so used them that Lassiter had to see this depth in her, this haunting promise more fitted to her years than to the flaunting guise of a wilful girl.

THE July days flew by. Jane reasoned that if it were possible for her to be happy during such a time, then she was happy. Little Fay completely filled a long aching void in her heart. In fettering the hands of this Lassiter she was accomplishing the greatest good of her life, and to do good even in a small way rendered happiness to Jane Withersteen. She had attended the regular Sunday services of her church; otherwise she had not gone to the village for weeks. It was unusual that none of her churchmen or friends had called upon her of late; but it was neglect for which she was glad. Judkins and his boy riders had experienced no difficulty in driving the white herd. So these warm July days were free of worry, and soon Jane hoped she had passed the crisis; and for her to hope was presently to trust, and then to believe.

She thought often of Venters, but in a dreamy, abstract way. She spent hours teaching and playing with little Fay. And the activity of her mind centered around Lassiter. The direction she had given her will seemed to blunt any branching off of thought from that straight line. The mood came to obsess her.

In the end, when her awakening came, she learned that she had builded better than she knew. Lassiter, tho kinder and gentler than ever, had parted with his quaint humor and his coldness and his tranquillity to become a restless and unhappy man. Whatever the power of his deadly intent toward Mormons, that passion now had a rival, and one equally burning and consuming. Jane Withersteen had one moment of exultation before the dawn of a strange uneasiness. What if she had made of herself a lure, at tremendous cost to him and to her, and all in vain!

That night in the moonlit grove she summoned all her courage, and, turning suddenly in the path, she faced Lassiter and leaned close to him, so that she touched him and her eyes looked up to his.

"Lassiter! . . . Will you do anything for me?"

In the moonlight she saw his dark, worn face change, and by that change she seemed to feel him immovable as a wall of stone.

Jane slipped her hands down to the swinging gun-sheaths, and, when she had locked her fingers around the huge, cold handles of the guns, she trembled as with a chilling ripple over all her body.

"May I take your guns?"

"Why?" he asked, and for the first time to her his voice carried a harsh note. Jane felt his hard, strong hands close round her wrists. It was not wholly with intent that she leaned toward him, for the look of his eyes and the feel of his hands made her weak.

"It's no trifle—no woman's whim—it's deep—as my heart. Let me take them?"

"Why?"

"I want to keep you from killing more men—Mormons. You must let me save you from more wickedness—more wanton bloodshed—" Then the truth forced itself falteringly from her lips. "You must—let—me—help me to keep my vow to Milly Erne. I swore to her—as she lay dying—that if ever any one came here to avenge her—I swore I would stay his hand. Perhaps I—I alone can save the—the man who—who—oh, Lassiter! . . . I feel that if I can't change you—then soon you'll go out to kill—and you'll kill by instinct—and among the Mormons you kill will be the one—who . . . . Lassiter, if you care a little for me—let me—for my sake—let me take your guns!"

As if her hands had been those of a child, he unclasped their clinging grip from the handles of his guns, and, pushing her away, he turned his gray face to her in one look of terrible realization, and then strode off into the shadows of the cottonwoods.

When the first shock of her futile appeal to Lassiter had passed, Jane took his cold, silent condemnation and abrupt departure not so much as a refusal to her entreaty as a hurt and stunned bitterness for her attempt at his betrayal. Upon further thought and slow consideration of Lassiter's past actions, she believed he would return and forgive her.

The man could not be hard to a woman, and she doubted that he could stay away from her. But at the point where she had hoped to find him vulnerable she now began to fear he was proof against all persuasion. The iron and stone quality that she had early suspected in him had actually cropped out as an impregnable barrier. Nevertheless, if Lassiter remained in Cottonwoods, she would never give up her hope and desire to change him. She would change him if she had to sacrifice everything dear to her except hope of heaven.

Passionately devoted as she was to her religion, she had yet refused to marry a Mormon. But a situation had developed wherein self paled in the great white light of religious duty of the highest order. That was the leading motive, the divinely spiritual one; but there were other motives, which, like tentacles, aided in drawing her will to the acceptance of a possible abnegation. And thru the watches of that sleepless night Jane Withersteen, in fear and sorrow and doubt came finally to believe that if she must throw herself into Lassiter's arms to make him abide by "Thou shalt not kill!" she would yet do well.

In the morning she expected Lassiter at the usual hour, but she was not able to go at once to the court so she sent little Fay. Mrs. Larkin was ill and required attention. It appeared that the mother, from the time of her arrival at Withersteen House, had relaxed and was slowly losing her hold on life. Jane had believed that absence of worry and responsibility coupled with good nursing and comfort would mend Mrs. Larkin's broken health. Such, however, was not the case.

When Jane did get out to the court, Fay was there alone, and at the moment embarking on a dubious voyage down the stone-lined amber stream upon a craft of two brooms and a pillow. Fay was as delightfully wet as she could possibly wish to get.

CLATTER of hoofs distracted Fay and interrupted the scolding she was gleefully receiving from Jane. The sound was not the light-spirited trot that Bells made when Lassiter rode into the outer court. This was slower and heavier, and Jane did not recognize in it any of her other horses. The appearance of Bishop Dyer startled Jane. He dismounted with his rapid, jerky motion, flung the bridle, and, as he turned toward the inner court and stalked up on the stone flags, his boots rang. In his authoritative front, and in the red anger unmistakably flaming in his face, he reminded Jane of her father.

"Is that the Larkin pauper?" he asked, bruskly, without any greeting to Jane.

"It's Mrs. Larkin's little girl," replied Jane, slowly.

"I hear you intend to raise the child?"

"Yes."

"Of course you mean to give her Mormon bringing up?"

"No!"

His questions had been swift. She was amazed at a feeling that some one else was replying for her.

"I've come to say a few things to you." He stopped to measure her with stern, speculative eye.

Jane Withersteen loved this man. From earliest childhood she had been taught to revere and love bishops of her church. And for ten years Bishop Dyer had been the closest friend and counselor of her father, and for the greater part of that period her own friend and Scriptural teacher. Her interpretation of her creed and her religious activity in fidelity to it, her acceptance of mysterious and holy Mormon truths, were all invested in this Bishop. Bishop Dyer as an entity was next to God. He was God's mouthpiece to the little Mormon community at Cottonwoods. God revealed himself in secret to this mortal.

And Jane Withersteen suddenly suffered a paralyzing affront to her consciousness of reverence by some strange irresistible twist of thought wherein she saw this Bishop as a man. And the train of thought hurdled the rising, crying protests of that other self whose poise she had lost. It was not her Bishop who eyed her in curious measurement. It was a man who tramped into her presence without removing his hat, who had no greeting for her, who had no semblance of courtesy.

In looks, as in action, he made her think of a bull stamping cross-grained into a corral. She had heard of Bishop Dyer forgetting the minister in the fury of a common man, and now she was to feel it. The glance by which she measured him in turn momentarily veiled the divine in the ordinary.

He looked a rancher, he was booted, spurred, and covered with dust; he carried a gun at his hip, and she remembered that he had been known to use it. But during the long moment while he watched her there was nothing commonplace in the slow-gathering might of his wrath.

"Brother Tull has talked to me," he began. "It was your father's wish that you marry Tull, and my order. You refused him?"

"Yes."

"You would not give up your friendship with that tramp Venters?"

"No."

"But you'll do as I order!" he thundered. "Why, Jane Withersteen, you are in danger of becoming a heretic! You can thank your Gentile friends for that. You face the damning of your soul to perdition."

In the flux and reflux of the whirling torture of Jane's mind, that new, daring spirit of hers vanished in the old habitual order of her life. She was a Mormon, and the Bishop regained ascendance.

"It's well I got you in time, Jane Withersteen. What would your father have said to these goings-on of yours? He would have put you in a stone cage on bread and water. He would have taught you something about Mormonism. Remember, you're a born Mormon. There have been Mormons who turned heretic—damn their souls!—but no born Mormon ever left us yet. Ah, I see your shame. Your faith is not shaken. You are only a wild girl." The Bishop's tone softened. "Well, it's enough that I got to you in time . . . Now tell me about this Lassiter. I hear strange things."

"What do you wish to know?" queried Jane.

"About this man. You hired him?"

"Yes, he's riding for me. When my riders left me I had to have any one I could get."

"Is it true what I hear—that he's a gun-man, a Mormon-hater, steeped in blood?"

"True—terribly true, I fear."

"But what's he doing here in Cottonwoods? This place isn't notorious enough for such a man. Sterling and the villages north, where there's universal gun-packing and fights every day—where there are more men like him, it seems to me they would attract him most. We're only a wild, lonely border settlement. It's only recently that the rustlers have made killings here. Nor have there been saloons till lately, nor the drifting in of outcasts. Has not this gun-man some special mission here?"

Jane maintained silence.

"Tell me," ordered Bishop Dyer, sharply.

"Yes," she replied.

"Do you know what it is?"

"Yes."

"Tell me that."

"Bishop Dyer, I don't want to tell."

He waved his hand in an imperative gesture of command. The red once more leaped to his face, and in his steel-blue eyes glinted a pin-point of curiosity.

"That first day," whispered Jane, "Lassiter said he came here to find—Milly Erne's grave!"

With downcast eyes Jane watched the swift flow of the amber water. She saw it and tried to think of it, of the stones, of the ferns; but, like her body, her mind was in a leaden vise. Only the Bishop's voice could release her. Seemingly there was silence of longer duration than all her former life.

"For what — else?" When Bishop Dyer's voice did cleave the silence it was high, curiously shrill, and on the point of breaking. It released Jane's tongue, but she could not lift her eyes.

"To kill the man who persuaded Milly Erne to abandon her home and her husband—and her God!"

With wonderful distinctness Jane Withersteen heard her own clear voice. She heard the water murmur at her feet and flow on to the sea; she heard the rushing of all the waters in the world. They filled her ears with low, unreal murmurings—these sounds that deadened her brain and yet could not break the long and terrible silence.

Then, from somewhere—from an immeasurable distance — came a slow, guarded, clinking, clanking step. Into her it shot electrifying life. It released the weight upon her numbed eyelids. Lifting her eyes she saw—ashen, shaken, stricken—not the Bishop but the man! And beyond him from round the corner came that soft, silvery step. A long black boot with a gleaming spur swept into sight—and then Lassiter! Bishop Dyer did not see, did not hear; he stared at Jane in the throes of sudden revelation.

"Ah, I understand!" he cried, in hoarse accents. "That's why you made love to this Lassiter—to bind his hands!"

It was Jane's gaze rivited upon the rider that made Bishop Dyer turn. Then

(Continued on Page 18.)

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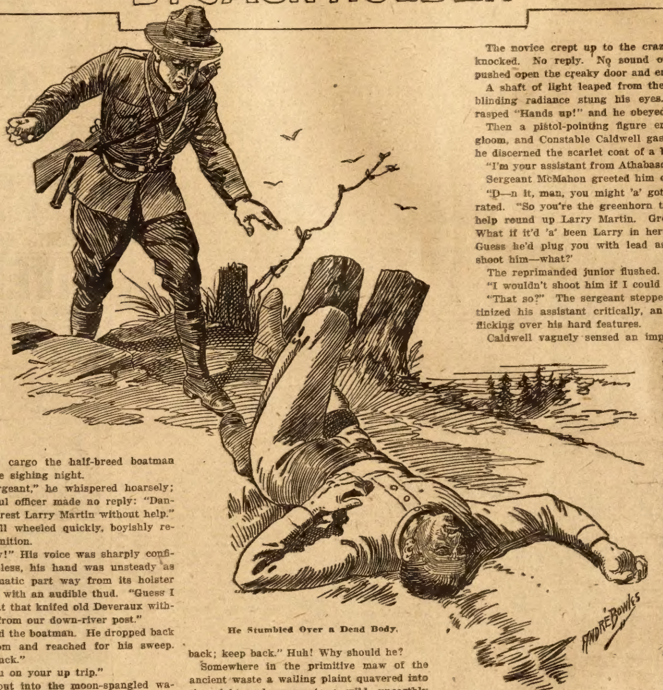
THE CRIME LINE

BY JACK HOLDEN



He Stumbled Over a Dead Body.

IN THE weird glow of a northern night a primitive freight scow snaked in from a sluggish current and grounded on a desolate bank of the Athabasca River, far beyond the law-abiding borders of civilization.

A fresh-faced youth, bravely attired in the scarlet jacket and yellow-striped breeches of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police, stepped gingerly over the side of the scow and strained his vision against the baffling velours of the nocturnal wilderness.

From a vantage-point atop his cargo the half-breed boatman also peered into the sighing night.

"No light, no sergeant," he whispered hoarsely; then, as the youthful officer made no reply: "Dangerous job you try 'rest Larry Martin without help."

Constable Caldwell wheeled quickly, boyishly resentful of the admonition.

"Oh, I don't know!" His voice was sharply confident; but, nevertheless, his hand was unsteady as he pulled his automatic part way from its holster and let it slip back with an audible thud. "Guess I can round up the rat that knifed old Deveraux without any assistance from our down-river post."

"Uh-huh!" grunted the boatman. He dropped back into the scow-bottom and reached for his sweep. "Mus' go now. G' luck."

"Thanks. See you on your up trip."

The scow poled out into the moon-spangled waterway.

"Oh, I say!" belatedly called the inexperienced man-hunter. "What's this Larry look like?"

No answer save the silken swish and gurgle of a little rapid that glinted silver in the moonshine.

Constable Caldwell watched the unwieldy scow pitch into the swirl and go gaily cavorting around a corner as tho well pleased to be off from the scene of an atrocious murder.

"Uncanny hole to be dumped in," he muttered, again battering his vision against the wall of the gloom. For a moment he almost regretted the adventurous itch that had dragged him from the safe placidity of a bank-clerking career to the dire hazard of capturing a murderer in No Man's Land.

"Guess there'd be some sort of glimmer in the old house if Sergeant McMahon had arrived from Chipewyan, like the major said he would. Wonder what sort of a duffer this McMahon is? Not that it matters a hoot."

The boyish officer pushed his way along an almost obliterated pathway to the comparative clearing, where, dimly discernible in the somber shades of the all-embracing forest, a huge black blob betokened the oddly fashioned and long deserted log cabin where the murder had been done—and in the vicinity of which the murderer might yet be lurking.

Knifelike gads stung his features. Hidden traps of the wild snagged at his feet. Vicious thorns bit at his hands. A night breeze from the forest depths moaned a dismal warning. The wilderness creaked and groaned a sullen protest of his intrusion. Somber voices all about him seemed to whisper: "Keep back; keep back." Huh! Why should he?

Somewhere in the primitive maw of the ancient waste a wailing plaint quavered into the night and swung to a wild, unearthly shriek, as tho the morose spirit of this awesome desolation voiced a despair born of eternal solitude.

The cry brought the red-coated ex-clerk to a startled stop.

"Timber wolf," he scorned in his trepidation. "Come, kid, buck up."

"I'm not scared of anything, dead or alive," he muttered stoutly, as if refuting some secret soul accusation. "Come along, murderer; get busy, ghost——"

Close at hand a stick snapped. It might have been a pistol-shot, to judge by the way Constable Caldwell's athletic frame tensed. He crouched behind the huge bole of a dolorously sighing forest giant, automatic clutched in ready grasp.

"Stung again!" he muttered presently, as tho resentful of the deception.

He worked forward. Evidently the path had not been trod of late. He gave up hope of expecting a brother officer from a down-river point.

The mysterious old house now loomed close in front of him, specter-like, strangely uncouth, an eery ghost of some forgotten man's ambition, snuggled in the somber embrace of a jealous wilderness. A tree-filtered moon spattered its sagging roof with big blobs of light.

"So that's where Larry slit the old boy's throat," Caldwell thought. "Nice cheerful place—for a murder. Larry is still in the district, I guess, but it's a cinch he's not in that house. Sergeant McMahon's not there, either. He should have arrived—darn it! I'll make sure."

The novice crept up to the crazy structure. He knocked. No reply. No sound of any kind. He pushed open the creaky door and entered.

A shaft of light leaped from the darkness and a blinding radiance stung his eyes. A gruff voice rasped "Hands up!" and he obeyed instantly.

Then a pistol-pointing figure emerged from the gloom, and Constable Caldwell gasped his relief as he discerned the scarlet coat of a brother officer.

"I'm your assistant from Athabasca," he said.

Sergeant McMahon greeted him coldly.

"D—n it, man, you might 'a' got winged," he berated. "So you're the greenhorn the major sent to help round up Larry Martin. Greenhorn is right. What if it'd 'a' been Larry in here instead of me? Guess he'd plug you with lead as quick as you'd shoot him—what?'

The reprimanded junior flushed.

"I wouldn't shoot him if I could help it," he said.

"That so?" The sergeant stepped back and scrutinized his assistant critically, an odd little smile flicking over his hard features.

Caldwell vaguely sensed an import in the man's words and actions that he could not quite fathom. He experienced a pang of disappointment. This uncouth sergeant was distinctly different from the spick-and-span brother officers whom he had met. His uniform was unkempt and ill-fitting. There was a little tear on the right side of the tunic.

The stamp of the wild was in the man's leathery countenance, an animal expression reminiscent of the wolf.

His thin slit of a mouth curved downward. Deep furrows, lining it from aquiline nose to powerful jaw, emphasized its ruthlessness. A huge shock of unkempt hair tumbled over his slanting forehead into the compassionless gray eyes.

There was that about him which suggested the human bloodhound developed to a savage degree of competency.

THRUOUT Caldwell's small supper-making operations the sergeant reclined on his blanket in front of the cabin's rusty old stove, uncompanionably silent and preoccupied. It was not until Caldwell had settled down beside him that he made an effort at speech.

"Larry Martin was my best friend," he muttered, his voice hoarse and scarcely above a whisper.

Caldwell propped himself up on one elbow and gazed at his granite-faced companion in astonishment.

The sergeant cleared his throat noisily and continued, his voice still dull and colorless:

"It's as vivid as tho it happened yesterday—that day, so long ago, when I first took notice of poor old Larry. He was coming along in his Sunday clothes, white collar and all, a little, red-edged Bible under one arm. One of our tough gang says, 'Let's kidnap Gertie,' and we did. Yes, sir; we stuffed a handkerchief in the sissy kid's mouth and lugged him off to our cave, out by the fair grounds.

"Oh, he kicked up a fuss—but inside of a month he was one of the gang. Queer, eh? Well, his

(Concluded on Page 20.)

Concluding Chapters Which Reveal the Identity of

The Bandit in Black

By Ralph Cummins

Read This First—Then Finish the Story

The next big shock to Doranda's populace was the finding of Carl Roth's blood-stained body on the floor of his private office. The discovery was made by

TOM MURPHY, the janitor-watchman, at 5 o'clock in the morning. Murphy immediately called Wheeler by phone, and within the next hour

COWAN, chief of police, Dr Mather, the coroner, and other officials were grouped about the body. A tall woman, according to the janitor, had left Roth's suite late at night. A lady's long, narrow fur was found in the office. Everything pointed to the mysterious woman bandit as the guilty person.

FRED ROTH arrived from Los Angeles. His wealthy brother's fate was no surprise to him. Some woman, or her avenger, was bound to "get him" sooner or later.

Wheeler was troubled. The dead man had been engaged to Clara Jensen. Then Gladys Brockton had come along, and asked that Miss Jensen be discharged from Roth's employ. Roth had not done so. The stenographer appeared greatly shocked by her employer's tragic death. Little was known in Doranda of Gladys Brockton's past. Her height and figure corresponded very closely with those of the woman in black. That much Wheeler well knew.

STANNARD, a detective, arrived from Los Angeles. He had been called, he said, before Roth's death, and by Roth himself. He had come too late, but would go to work on the case. Wheeler's purse and an automatic revolver were picked up in the park. Nothing had been taken from the purse but the marked coins.

Gladys invited Wheeler, Stannard and Ethel to her bungalow for an evening. She was anxious to meet a real live detective, Ethel phoned. Stannard discovered that a typewritten note to Roth on the day of his death was written on Miss Brockton's typewriter, and on a bit of paper torn from a business letter lying on the machine.

CHAPTER IX.

LOVE.

JUST before noon next day Ethel called Wheeler on the telephone to ask if Miss Brockton might ride into Los Angeles with them. She hastened to say that Gladys had an appointment and would not be a member of their evening party. Of course Wheeler consented. He would have agreed to anything that Ethel could have suggested.

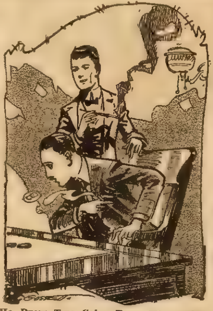
Stannard was in and out of the office all the morning. He spent an hour at one time going over the walls searching for the missing bullet hole. He was plainly troubled and had little to say to Wheeler.

Chief Cowan lounged into the private office just as Wheeler was getting ready to leave.

"Darn it," grumbled the officer with a furtive glance toward the outer office door. "I can't get that Jensen girl out of my mind. That love affair with Carl Roth was—but she seems to have a perfect alibi."

"She tells me she was home all night," said Wheeler.

"It looks that way. I was just up talking to her brother. He's a consumptive and sleeps in a screened porch off his sister's room—she has to go thru



He Drew Two Coins From His Pocket and Laid Them on the Desk.

his porch to get to her room. And on the night of the murder she helped him move his cot across the outside door—she was afraid the fog would wet him. So Clara couldn't have got out without waking him."

"No window?"

"Yes, but it's fifteen feet or more to the ground and no sign of a ladder."

"Well"—Wheeler was impatient to go—"I think our detective is on the track of something. He just told me that he hoped to have everything cleared up by the time of the inquest on Monday."

Bruce Wheeler spent that Saturday evening in paradise. After dropping Gladys at the Alexandria where she was to meet a friend, Ethel and Wheeler had dinner in a little out-of-the-way restaurant on Seventh street.

Ethel was in great spirits. There was a touch of color in her freckled cheeks that never came from a rouge jar. Her brown eyes sparkled with the joy of living and a soft note in her bell-like voice made the whole world bright to the enamored Wheeler.

After dinner they wandered on Broadway until theater time. Then they went to the Mason to a comedy for which Wheeler had obtained tickets.

After the two hours of chuckling mirth they walked back to their car in a private park, and started home. They were late in reaching Doranda, for the reason that somewhere on the way Wheeler took the whole life and death matter into the hands of the moment and insisted on telling Ethel just how much he loved her.

"I can't help it tonight," he said. "Before—you've held me off—now—well, I love you, girl. And I never met a real girl of my kind before." He gulped, and as Ethel remained encouragingly silent, he plunged on. "And I'm going up. The Roth people are going to reorganize and they have offered me the position of general manager. I'll be allowed to put the few dollars that I have saved into the concern and that means independence in five years."

Ethel did not speak, but an almost imperceptible snuggling movement gave Wheeler his cue. He caught the little form in his arms and raised her face toward him.

Then her arms went round his neck and her girlish voice, breaking just a little, crooned in his ear.

"Oh, I do love you, Bruce—you great big joy-man! And some day—I'll marry you—if you want me—then?"

Wheeler was wild with the joy of the miracle. Why, he had been almost despairing of ever winning her, and now, all at once—— He couldn't believe it! After he kissed Ethel good-by at the porch door of her bungalow, he turned his roadster up the Valley boulevard, and yelled his boyish joy as he hit a sixty-mile clip on the black highway. He did not try to sleep that night.

CHAPTER X.

TRAPPED.

ABOUT 10 the next morning, just as Wheeler was finishing his late Sunday morning breakfast, Stannard strolled into the hotel dining-room. With a calm nod the detective slipped into a chair beside Wheeler and ordered a cup of coffee.

"You've had breakfast?" asked Wheeler

"Oh, yes, hours ago." Stannard fumbled a spoon, "Well, I've run down your mystery bandit."

"You've arrested her? Do I—is it Miss Brockton?"

"No—I haven't arrested her. I'm not quite sure that it will come to that—there are several matters that are not quite clear yet, and besides—Let's walk up to the office. The time has come when I've got to tell you about it."

Wheeler opened the hall door to the private office with his pass key. Stannard lighted his cigarette and sat upon the corner of the big desk.

"I wish I hadn't taken this case," he said soberly. "That cold-blooded Roth brother is right—an affair like this is better left alone—still——"

"What have you discovered?" demanded Wheeler.

"A number of things—for instance, do you recognize these?"

He drew two coins from his pocket and laid them on the desk. Wheeler picked them up with unsteady fingers.

"Where did you find these?"

"You recognize them?"

"Of course, these are two of the marked coins that I carried on purpose for the lady bandit. You were able to trace them?"

"Yes—straight to the Salvation Army."

"Salvation—you're crazy!"

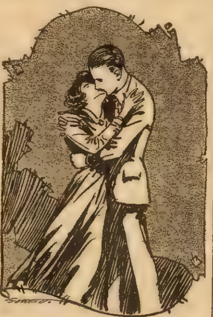
"Oh, no—wait. I had about twenty places looking out for those coins. A little grocery down below the railroad tracks got hold of these two. They had been spent by an old Mexican woman. She had received them from the local Salvation Army. The captain of that organization found them in that box they keep beside the door for donations of old clothes. There was something over a dollar and a half, altogether."

There was a light rap at the door. Wheeler opened it. Ethel and Gladys Brockton stood outside.

"We came to take you to church," Ethel said lightly, her eyes ashine. "Come on—you, too, Mr. Stannard."

"Just a moment." The detective walked slowly around the desk. "Come in, won't you? We were discussing— I believe we have a matter here that will interest you."

"We'll be late," pouted Ethel, but she came into the room and Gladys followed, a little reluctantly, it seemed to Wheeler.



He Closed the Door With His Foot—His Hands Were Otherwise Engaged.

"I have every reason to believe that I have uncovered Doranda's mysterious woman bandit," Stannard went on quietly after the girls were seated. "If my leads are right her highway robbery was merely a blind—her real purpose was to kill Carl Roth!"

Wheeler looked from one girl to the other. They both appeared equally surprised. Miss Brockton smiled incredulously, while Ethel merely stared with narrowed eyes at the detective.

"I got my little start from the murdered man's brother. He didn't want to talk about it and he wouldn't have done so if he hadn't been sure that the murderer was safely far away. It seems that some five years ago Carl Roth lived in Chicago. He met two sisters there. There name was—well, they called themselves Tilden. The older one was an actress in a dramatic stock house, the other was just finishing high school.

"Roth met this younger Tilden girl thru his agency connection with the

(Continued on Page 24.)

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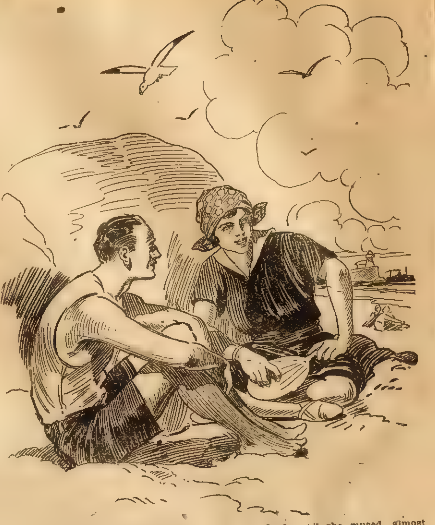
Grandma Sits in the Game

By G. Maxwell



GRANDMA was sitting behind her favorite big rock at the bathing hour. It was the windy side of the rock, and she was sitting there for two reasons. She liked to feel her gray hair blow in the wind, and she preferred looking at the green hills to looking at the blue water.

"The sea is all very well for youth," she explained gravely to Mrs. Osborn, who was passing. "It is turbulent and changing and restless, but to old age the peace and protection of the hills is far more cozy."

"Old age and you, my dear Mrs. Cunningham, will never be bedfellows," Mrs. Osborn predicted, laughingly.

"Only because I prefer twin beds."

Grandma watched enviously as Mrs. Osborn disappeared. It was her ideal to look as happily disheveled as Mrs. Osborn, but she never achieved her ideal. Grandma's hair was the sort that just isn't stringy. Novelty, change, excitement was to Grandma the elixir of life. In search of it she gyrated from New York to California, to Florida, to Yellowstone Park, but the thrills that made up a greater part of her acquaintance's trips never entered hers. "Not even a train wreck," she complained bitterly to her son, as she related to him the details of her last commonplace, trans-continental trip, "not so much as a baby with chicken-pox in the car, James."

She smiled now as she heard voices. Up from the water raced that nice Roger and her granddaughter Ruth, panting as they flung themselves down on the other side of the rock.

"Dears," Grandma murmured, as she picked up her book. "I wish she'd marry that nice boy and hurry up about it. Where was I?"

The voices on the other side of the rock were a blurred accompaniment to the surf, but she lost her place as she heard Ruth's voice rise in sudden protest.

"Father will be absolutely wild if we do it."

Grandma dropped her book, listening intently.

"He goes wild, simply wild, over me," Roger replied, tauntingly.

"But he will, Rodge. Dad's so conventional. An elopement in the family would be to him what a—what a—midnight spree down at Jimson's place would be to your mother. Worse," she finished, dramatically.

"The simile falls flat. Moms is a good old sport. She would highly approve of our eloping. And why not, really?" he demanded. "Why not?"

"Because, Rodge, it—just—isn't—done. Not by the people we know."

"Well, then," he flared, and Grandma, peering excitedly around the edge of her rock, saw him impatiently roll out of the cocoon of warm sand that Ruth had patted around him. "Well, then, let's see that it is done. That's a fine reason for a thinking young woman who has recently received the vote along with some trifling twenty-nine million thinking sisters. Your father will never let you marry me. He called me 'low-geared' this very morning."

"'Low-geared?'"

At her peals of laughter, he colored a healthy red. Dramatically he leaped to his feet. "Let me show you what happened. I called as usual, to ask him for the hand of his daughter, and we had one of our periodical, perfectly diabolical fights."

"Yes? Go on. Did he eject you personally, or have the butler do it? Or maybe Lucretia with the frying-pan?"

"'When you can show me,' said he, 'that you can stick to one thing—put it over successfully—you may marry Ruth.'"

Roger's pose was unmistakable. His feet apart, his brows drawn together, more than a hint of middle-aged obesity in his carriage, he was her father's most arrogant self.

"Go on," she demanded, appreciatively.

"'Do one thing—do it thoroly—override obstacles. The youth of today,'" Roger shifted an imaginary cigar, "'the youth of today is a failure. He has no imagination, no force. Why didn't you sell Stillman that car yesterday?'" Those were your father's words. He glared at Ruth, lower lip thrust out, aggressively antagonistic.

"I can hear him. Just dad all over. What did you say?"

"Told him why. Stillman's afflicted with congenital inferiority. Hasn't sense. He said the car hadn't the power of his old one, so he'd keep that awhile."

"And then?"

Roger resumed his glowering. He paced back and forth, hands thrust into imaginary pockets, shoulder hitching irritably. "'That's all,' snapped your father. 'You're low-geared, Roger. You have my answer. Good morning.'"

Roger dropped down on the sand. Grandma leaned back against her rock, laughing helplessly.

"You see," he resumed, "your father dislikes me."

"Dislikes is a very tame word for the way dad feels towards you," she murmured.

"——dislikes me, I say, for no reason on earth than that I want to marry his precious daughter. Darned selfish of him. I can support you, I'm well established, well connected, can trace my ancestry back as far as he, or hire some one with sufficient imagination who can, am fair looking——"

"Conceited!"

"Don't interrupt. Dress well, dance very well——"

"That particularly would appeal to him," the girl broke in again sarcastically.

"Swim well, golf. Good heavens, what more can he expect in a son-in-law?"

Grandma held her breath for the answer.

"He just doesn't want me married, stupid."

"Don't I know it? Deuced selfish of him, I say. He's got his mother, hasn't he?"

HIS mother, around the corner of the rock, chuckled, but listened again intently, as the man's accusing voice went on: "Isn't one woman enough? And Lucretia, that's two. Why doesn't he get himself a wife, if he wants more women about?"

"Roger!"

"Forgive me, dear. I was only thinking of making him comfortable. You may not marry me, or any one else, and you want to marry me? Once more, will you elope with me?"

"A real old-fashioned elopement, down a ladder?" the girl questioned quickly.

"Absolutely," he promised, quickly following up his advantage.

"And throw my jewels down first—his daughter and his ducats?" she inquired gaily. "Yes, I will, Roger. I'll never get married any other way. We've fussed over this thing long enough. I'll go."

"You will, really?" he exulted.

Grandma hugged herself delightedly, and unable to contain herself a moment longer she quickly hitched herself around the corner of the rock.

"Please mayn't I elope, too?" and she peered at them mischievously from under her brilliant green sunshade.

"Grandma!" cried Ruth, astounded at having her grandmother a third party at what was obviously a situation to be controlled by but the immediate contracting parties.

"Where in thunder," began Roger, his face itself like a thundercloud, but she interrupted him, her head lifted proudly, her voice curiously shaken.

"This is my own private rock, and I always come here during the bathing hour. I didn't mean to eavesdrop really, dears, but when I heard the word 'elope,' I was stirred, yes, stirred as I have not been in fifty years."

Her dark eyes kindled, and her face was eloquent as she hurried on. "To me it means the cutting of fetters, the end of entangling alliances, air to breathe, wearing clothes one likes——"

"Why, Granny, dear," Ruth burst out, amazed at her vehemence.

Jabbing the handle of her parasol in the warm sand to give her hands free play, she looked up at the two as a big tear splashed down on her dark blue dress. She brushed it off the fine lace vest with a careful handerchief, but the fingers that held the handkerchief were shaking. Ruth was amazed. She had never seen her pretty grandmother anything but her usual reserved, humorous self. She had always been an integral part of the household, and Ruth had always taken her as much for granted as she had the mahogany buffet that had come from England in seventeen hundred and something. They were both old, handsome, and she was proud to belong to the home that possessed them.

"Listen, dears," the voice of the grandmother began again slowly. "Do you know what I am? A slave. Yes, I am. Don't look so scared, Ruth. Indeed, my mind is all there, and each wheel clicking perfectly." Her eyes twinkled merrily at Ruth's still-amazed face. She raised one hand to her beautiful gray hair and carefully patted a marceled wave into place, adjusting a recalcitrant hairnet before she went on, still more slowly. "My clothes, you know, Ruth, are not only chosen, but ordered by my sister Martha in New York; blue voile for mornings, black satin or silk or broadcloth for the rest of the day. They are always handsome in a heavy, dowager way, that is Martha's, but not my style, and they are Martha's and not my choice. Did you ever see me wear a dress that looked as if it had been made with me in mind, Ruth? Does this one really look like me?"

Slowly Ruth shook her head, her eyes still wide with the amazement of grandma's rebellion.

"Why don't you chuck 'em, the clothes, I mean, and get those you want?" Roger asked.

Grandma spread eloquent hands. "Disposes of the situation with true masculine brevity? For the same reason, my dear Roger, that Ruth does not marry you. Because we are both bossed within an inch of our lives by my son, Ruth's father, and always have been. Lucretia has been cook for twenty years and rules my diet with a heavy hand. I have my own car, but your father chose it, Ruth, I didn't. It is a neat, black, hearsy-looking sedan. I may be getting on, but I'm not dead yet," she mused, almost viciously. "I am hedged in—circumvented—bound down every hour of my day and every hour of my life. I want to wear frisky white or blue dresses always, lovely, filmy, soft floating things. Hate 'em stiff. I want my car upholstered in—in red, and open, so I can breathe and get my hair blown. It's nice hair and all my own," she explained much to Roger's amusement. "I have

That Curious Device for Making Fire

IT was only seventy-five years ago that a woman of the Middle West wrote to her cousin in New York:

> *"Last winter I was told of a curious new device for making fire. It consisted of small splinters of wood with tips of some substance that bursts into flame when rubbed on a rough surface. If you can procure some of them for me I shall be grateful."*

Matches were in general use in Europe for years before they were seen in this country. There was no means for spreading such news rapidly.

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⁂

Time given to reading the advertisements is well spent.

my own money," she hurried on again, eager to set forth her advantages, watching each face to see the effect of her words, "and I'm never sick. I play good golf, too."

"You bet you do. Corking," agreed Roger. "You can put it all over Moms, and she plays a game no one can sneeze at."

"And I won't be any trouble, really, if you'll just let me live with you," she ended so wistfully that Ruth swooped down on the little lady, nearly strangling her in her swift embrace. The girl's eyes were wet, but she shook the tears from her eyes as she smiled up at Roger.

"You bet you can," he responded promptly, catching up one of Grandma's hands, and patting it awkwardly. "It'll be simply great to have you."

The little old lady drew herself gently away from Ruth and with businesslike brevity began polishing her eye-glasses. "Then it's settled," she announced. "We elope tonight. At what time?"

The two younger people stared at each other for a moment, then burst into gales of laughter.

"Certainly," she gravely assured them. "I wouldn't miss eloping for the world. James would never let me, any more than he would let Ruth. And I've never had any excitement in my life," she pleaded. "It's all been just so fearfully staid and proper. Please, let's elope."

Roger, suddenly sobered, considered a moment, then leaped to his feet and shook the sand from his wet suit. "There's a lot to do first," he exclaimed, "there's the license, the minister——"

"Wait," cried Ruth. "I know, let's drive to Riverside and be married by that sweet Dr. Knowlton. He's an old friend of Dad and that will help take Dad's curse off the elopement."

"I, myself, like the curse on, but that's your affair, an elopement being more or less personal," conceded Grandma. "And I'll stay right there at the Mission Inn while you two take the train up to San Francisco, and run over to Honolulu."

"Not on your life, Grandma," Roger spoke decisively. "You're going straight along with us all the way. We want you."

"Not really, Roger." Her voice broke.

Leaning over her, Roger lifted her to her feet and took both her hands in his. "Listen, old dear," he said, his voice reverent, "we want you just a little more than we want anything else in the world except each other. Our home shall be your home, and our car your car, and it'll be an open one, magenta, if you like, trimmed with purple, and a hummer for speed."

"Thank you, Roger," she answered, looking straight up in his eyes, "and we will really go down a ladder, won't we?"

"Yes; we will really go down a ladder," he promised.

Hundreds of times, maybe thousands, she had passed ladders, and they had never looked steep to Grandma, nor dangerous, nor even venturesome, but when only a few hours later she looked down on one that impudently reared itself up to her own window, she caught her breath in a startled gasp. It seemed impossible that any one could by any possibility deliberately step out on it without hurling himself to instant death.

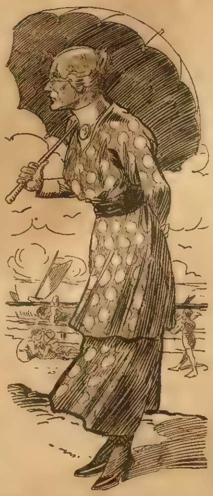
"Couldn't it be more on the bias?" she asked, turning eyes shining with excitement to Ruth, who was peering over her shoulder.

"Sh—no, I guess it's all right. Roger's holding it. I'll lower the suitcase first. Help me tie this rope on, will you, deary?"

Grandma's fingers shook so that she proved not to be a very efficient tier-on of ropes, but at last they had them lowered, and the old lady briskly put one foot on the window sill, but Ruth's sibilant whisper gave her pause.

"Back out, Grandma, you'll catch your heels if you don't. You'd better let me go first, so's to grab you if I have to."

The little old lady sniffed disdainfully, but took another look down the appalling distance of apparently straight-up-and-down ladder and hastily let Ruth precede her.



"Please, Mayn't I Elope, Too?" and She Peered at Them Mischievously.

"Oh, dear. I've got to go back," Grandma shrilled as they were just nicely started groundward. "I've left my glasses."

"No, you don't," answered Ruth, clutching at her. "You come straight down."

Slowly, step by step, they descended, the old lady protesting and expostulating. At last, after what seemed a mile of ladder to Ruth and several kilometers of ladder to her grandmother, Roger grasped first one and then the other and lifted them to the ground.

"What was the row up there?" he asked; "thought you were reniging on us, Grandma. Didn't lose your nerve, did you?"

"Only my glasses," the old lady assured him peering at him in the dim light of the stars. "I've got to have them. You just run up and get them for me, will you?"

"But where are they?" he queried aghast. "I don't know the house—upstairs."

Ruth broke in, "Quick, Roger. You'll have to go back for them. Got a flashlight?"

He produced one from his pocket.

"Good. This is Grandma's room we came out of. The glasses are right on the mantel, aren't they, dear?"

"Yes," whispered the old lady hoarsely, "or in the top drawer of the dressing-table. Careful, the drawer sticks."

Roger's face, in the dim light, was a study. Anger, amusement, impatience registered in quick succession, but as he started up the ladder he leaned down and said: "Hurry over to the car. It's in front of the house next door across the street. I'll bring the bags."

Neither woman moved. Both stood silent, their heads thrown back, watching his ascent, clutching at each other in the thrill of the moment. They did not want to cross the lawn alone. Suddenly in the room above there was a crash.

"He's jerked out the drawer," cried Ruth. "Come on, let's run."

With a gasp of dismay, Ruth caught up one of the bags, clutched at Grandma's hand and rushed across the lawn. Behind her she heard the scrape of the ladder as Roger swung himself onto it, and looking over her shoulder she saw her father's room blazing with lights.

"Hurry, Grandma, or he'll get us!"

"He will not!" panted the old lady, half falling down the terrace. "You know it took James a half hour to dress when the house was burning."

"Quick, get in," Roger grabbed open the car door, throwing in the bags. "I got the glasses, but there's the devil to pay back there. See the lights?"

"Dad's room," Ruth spoke succinctly, but she was trembling with excitement. "Let's go. Oh, wait, what was that?"

They listened.

"It is. It's the creak of the garage door. Look, it's Dad's car backing out. For Heaven's sake, Rodge!"

Before the words were finished they were off, their car shooting thru the darkened streets of the town like a shuttle in a factory loom.

"We'll lose him first of all," Roger said thru his teeth. "We'll lose him right here and now. I don't care to race him all the way to Riverside, not with his new car, I don't."

EXCEPT for a quick drawn breath or a long sigh of relief as they slipped around the corner, there was no sound in the car. No one spoke. The tension was too keen.

"There's our house," Roger said as they swung around a corner on two wheels, "and Momsie's room is lighted."

"He's phoned her, of course," groaned Ruth. "Oh, Rodge, how could you bang that drawer so?"

"Don't you scold him," interrupted grandma. "He got the glasses. If I had done it, I never could have come down the ladder so fast and you'd have had to elope alone. James would have caught me, anyway."

Ruth laughed hysterically and Roger's deep chuckle relieved the situation.

"Now we must have lost him. Let's head for Riverside by that road we tried last Sunday," Ruth broke in nervously.

"Exactly. You're on. He wouldn't think of going that way."

Again there was silence as the car raced thru the darkness. Mile after mile of dark, oiled pavement slipped by them, as the car raced over the perfect road with the swiftness of an inspired arrow. Finally Roger spoke, thoughtfully, "I pretty nearly didn't get up to my room at all tonight. Thought Moms would never let me go. She kept walking me round and round the garden, talking about the time when I was a kid."

"Will she care, Rodge?" Ruth asked in a hushed voice.

"Moms care? Not she. She's the best sport. She always said it was the regret of her life that she hadn't eloped. She doesn't often get affectionate, and I wouldn't have minded tonight if I hadn't just had to pack my bag and get off."

"Look," cried Grandma, "what's that?"

"Motorcycle cop. Speed-trap. D—n!"

The little old lady was shaking. "Oh, give her gas, Roger. Don't let him catch us," she begged, hanging on to Ruth while she leaned out to watch the swiftly gaining motorcycle.

"No use," muttered Roger as he abruptly slowed down. The motorcycle drew up.

"Why didn't you stop when I yelled at you?"

"Didn't hear you."

"We're in a hurry, officer," broke in the gentle, sweet voice of Grandma. "We're hurrying to a doctor's." With her hand to her head, her body sagged against Ruth. "Can't you let us go on?"

The officer looked sharply at the three of them, plainly undecided just where his duty lay. He was new in the service and did not want anything put over on him.

"We're after bootleggers tonight," he said. "Sorry, ma'am, but I'll have to go thru your car."

"Might as well get it over," Roger muttered. "Thought he had us for speeding, sure."

Quickly the officer pulled over the first bag, which proved to be the little old lady's."

"Ah," he said with deep satisfaction, as he lifted out a large bottle.

Grandma was out of the car on the instant. "You put that back, sir," she said, reaching for it, "that is my hair tonic, my private formula, and you can't have it. It hasn't any alcohol in it, anyway."

"That's what they all say," responded the officer, rummaging thru the other bags.

"Give it back." She stamped her foot

(Continued on Page 21.)

Victoria Grey's Talks to Women

(Concluded From Page 7.)

caught within this bowl, so long will my princess and I keep each other."

And, true enough, the recent ages found the prince and the princess sleeping side by side. But, instead of Alpha Draconis shining down into the bowl of quick-silver, another star, altogether was shining down; our own North Star. And while Alpha Draconis strives to get a glimpse down that little passage-way, its position has shifted with the ages and another star looks thru.

Thus, from discovering this tablet and the bowl of mercury, recent scientists have discovered that the north pole turns an entire little circle once in many thousands of years. So that Alpha Draconis, which is the largest star in the constellation Draco, the dragon, will again be our North Star some day.

Thus they have found the earth, like a top, spinning on its axis, has a little bit of a wobble in that axis, a very steady and measured wobble, a very tiny wobble, but a wobble none the less.

FORCED BY GRATITUDE OF MANY TO REPEAT HIS OFFER

Moved by the expressions of gratitude of many patients and friends for regained hearing, Specialist Sproule feels almost forced to bring his Method of treatment for Ear troubles within the reach of other sufferers and so he offers again a 4-day introductory treatment free.

These free offers have been made before in this paper and in others. People have seen the sample treatment, liked it and come under the Method. Then there have been letters of which the following are sample extracts:—

From the sunny South comes the word: **"I can hear a watch tick, a thing I have not heard for years."**

While a lady from the Middle West writes:—**"I am glad to say that I am feeling fine and can hear good and it is a pleasure to answer the 'phone. I can do my own talking now which is a great comfort to me."**

4-Day Deafness Treatment Free

These letters of gratitude have indeed been a satisfaction to receive and so we say to the readers of Boyce's Weeklies: **A free treatment will be given to every sufferer from Ear Troubles, who writes for it.**

If you are becoming Deaf in either or both ears or have any trouble with your ears, write for a Free Treatment. This treatment is entirely Free. I want to help you. There is much of suffering and deprivation connected with the loss of hearing. I want you to at least have the same opportunity as the many other people who were most anxious concerning their ear troubles, but are now happy, grateful possessors of their hearing. These people whose testimonials you read above, all saw the Method, first, through the sample.

Follow their example. Send off now, a post card or a letter with your full name and address. Don't delay, or you may regret it. If you have even the slightest feeling that something is wrong with your ears, be on the safe side and send for a treatment. It won't cost you anything. If you are growing Deaf and have become discouraged, profit by the example of those Who have shared in the triumphs of this Method. **Write today for a Free Treatment, to**

EAR SPECIALIST SPROULE
306 Cornhill Bldg., Boston, Mass.

30 DAYS FREE TRIAL
$10 Worth of Records FREE

Simply wonderful! The limit of value giving! Just think! A GENUINE DAVIS PHONOGRAPH on 30 Days' Free Trial, and on terms as low as $2 A MONTH in case you decide to buy. Magnificent instruments in quartered oak or mahogany piano finished cases, equipped with the finest worm gear motors, rich toned machines — at less than half the standard prices—and $10 worth of records FREE.

Send No Money

Just a postal with your name and address. Only a limited number of machines shipped on this extra-liberal offer. Better act quickly. This is a life-time opportunity.

DAVIS, Dept. P-1,
6101 May St., CHICAGO

DENINGER WILL SAVE YOU 25 TO 50 DOLLARS

$40

BIG MONEY SAVINGS FOR YOU

Used and rebuilt motorcycles, single and twins, $25 to $100. Used bicycles, $6.00, tandems, $10. All machines guaranteed in good working order. New bicycles and motorcycles at Factory prices. You save dealers' profits. Motorcycle and automobile tires too, $3.00. Complete line of parts and supplies.

Send for catalog

Deninger Cycle Co., Rochester, N.Y.

FINE NEW FORD TOURING CAR GIVEN

15	8	25	15	21
8	5	14	18	25

Solve This Puzzle and Win 10,000 Votes

The figures represent corresponding letters in the alphabet. Figure 1 is A, 2 is B, 3 is C, and so on. The ten figures spell three words. Send the three words with your name and address quick. I have given away many Autos, Cash Rewards and other Prizes to contestants in former Contests. Full particulars of my simple plan will be sent when your solution is received.

Thousands of Dollars in Other Grand Prizes and Cash Rewards

Besides the Auto I am going to give Phonographs, Bicycles, Gold Watches, Silverware, Dinner Set, etc., and Cash Rewards to contestants in my contest for subscriptions. Prizes duplicated in case of tie. Get your share of these EASY-TO-WIN prizes. No experience required, and no contestant is asked to pay one cent of their own money. Don't let anyone in your neighborhood beat you to it. The quicker you act the bigger your winnings if you follow my plan. Just send your answer to the puzzle with your name and address.

DUANE W. GAYLORD, 537 S. Dearborn St., Dept. 15, CHICAGO, ILL.

Boys! Earn $1.00 to $5.00 a Week

selling The Saturday Blade, Chicago Ledger and Lone Scout.

These great papers are known all over. People in every town want some one to buy the Blade and Ledger from each week and boys everywhere watch each month for Lone Scout. We send the Blade and Ledger in one bundle each week so they come on Friday. The Lone Scout comes just before the first of the month. You have a paper to sell to every man, woman or boy. Easy to sell and to build up a route of steady customers. Only one report for you to make out each week. You make 2 cents on each Blade, 3 cents on each Ledger, and 4 cents on each Lone Scout you sell. You can't lose. You don't send us any money until you sell the papers. In addition we give you valuable premiums for every paper you sell. If you want to join the Lone Scouts of America, the great Organization for boys that is free of dues, and if you are accepted, we pay for you the expense of joining. Just fill out the blank below and we will send you a complete agents' outfit. We tell you how to get customers.

W. D. BOYCE CO., 500 N. Dearborn St., CHICAGO, ILL. Send This Coupon Today

I accept the agency for your 3 papers. Send me as many copies of each as you think I can sell the first week. If I qualify, it is understood you will pay my expense of joining the Lone Scouts of America if I want to join.
Also tell me about the free premiums.

Name ....

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Age.................. Town .... State .... C. L.

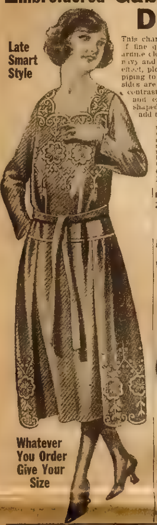
The Co-operative Movement is Sweeping the World

See These Tremendous Co-operative Money Savings

Co-operation Means Bargains No Profiteering No Middlemen

Don't Send a Penny

Embroidered Gabardine Dress



This charming dress is made of fine quality cotton gabardine cloth in two colors navy and burgundy. Note the long waisted bodice effect, pleasingly emphasized by contrasting color piping to match embroidery. The loose panels on sides are scalloped at bottom and embroidered in contrasting color. Blouse also scalloped at neck and embroidered in contrasting color. Bell shaped sleeves and sash belt which ties in front add to give this dress a most chic appearance. Women's sizes 34 to 46 inch bust, skirt length [illegible] inches. Misses sizes 32 to 38 inch bust, skirt length measured from natural waist line about [illegible] inches.

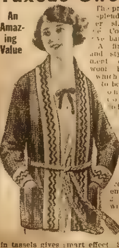
Co-operative Price **$2.78**

Order Navy Blue by No. XB1380. Burgundy by No. XB1382

Don't send a penny. Pay on arrival. We pay postage

Whatever You Order Give Your Size

Tuxedo Sweater



The price of this splendid sweater shows how the Co-operators give bargains. A fine, warm and stylish garment of mixed wool. Roll collar which continues to bottom is in contrasting color with [illegible] and has rows embroidery. The full length turn back cuffs also in contrasting color and embroidered 2 pockets with vertical pleat. Braided girdle ending in tassels gives smart effect. Sizes 34 to 44. Choice of 3 color combinations.

Order Brown and Buff by No. XE1025. Black and White by No. XE1026. Jockey and Taupe by No. XE1027. Don't send a penny. Pay on arrival. We pay postage.

Co-operative Price **$3.89**

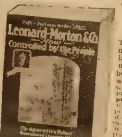
LEONARD-MORTON & CO., the famous Mail Order house is now controlled by the CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY OF AMERICA—an organization of 90,000 people like you and me, banded together to **smash high prices and to put the cost of living down where it belongs.**

HARRISON PARKER

We acquired control of this gigantic mail order house to win freedom from profiteers and middlemen, through COLLECTIVE BUYING, which means money saving and independence for the consumer just as COLLECTIVE BARGAINING means **independence for the worker.**

The smashed price bargains on this page tell the story. The Co-operators have cut from their purchases all the surplus, exorbitant and unnecessary profits that have been going into the pockets of dealers and privately owned corporations. And you who buy get the benefit of ROCK BOTTOM PRICES secured through the tremendous buying power of this great co-operative society.

Don't send a penny with your order. Wait until the goods arrive, then pay the postman the small co-operative price. If, after examination, the goods do not satisfy you, return them and we will return your money.



You Need Not Be a Co-operator to Profit by These Bargains

The co-operators now operating this tremendous mail order house, also controlling 1,300 acres of land, a big 18 story Chicago office building, 5 canneries, a bank and life insurance company, offer the benefits of their organization to every man and woman who is tired of paying profiteering prices which go to fatten the pockets of middlemen and private corporate enterprises. **Save those extra profits for yourself.** Co-operation is here to stay—here to give you the united support of nearly [illegible] people who have demonstrated that united action in buying and distributing secures lowest prices and reduced living cost.

Harrison Parker
PRESIDENT

FREE! The Great Co-operative Bargain Catalog Explains All

[illegible] **Bargain Catalog** (weighing a [illegible]) [illegible] this wonderful [illegible] movement [illegible] is **swept across the country like wildfire,** enabling people everywhere to get the most out of every dollar [illegible]. **It also shows thousands of other bargains** [illegible] **co-operative prices,** for the sake of the independence and [illegible] of yourself and your family you must have this wonderful **Co-operative Bargain Catalog. Remember you get it free.**

ACT TODAY! Find out about the splendid work these Co-operators have done and are doing to save money for the great mass of people who have suffered too long from the heavy burden of inflated prices. **Send your order and get the catalog** or ask us to send the catalog even if you don't order. Learn how you can make savings such as you have never made before. Let the CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY OF AMERICA help you to cut down the high cost of living.

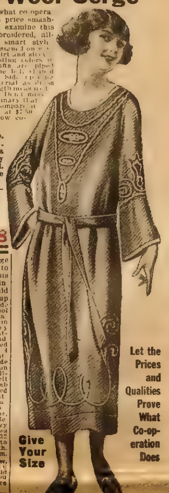
Leonard-Morton & Co., Dept. 11, Chicago, Ill.

Richly Embroidered All-Wool Serge

You will see what co-operation means in price smashing when you examine this splendid, embroidered, all-wool navy blue serge dress, very smart style taken from a costly imported model designed on very exclusive lines. Front of waist and skirt and sleeves are prettily embroidered with contrasting colors in very artistic design. Collar and cuffs are piped with contrasting color. Also note the bell shaped cuffs, one of fashion's latest ideas. Side opening with patent snaps. Girdle same material as dress ties in front. Sizes 34 to 46. Skirt length measured from natural waist line, about 37 in. Don't miss this bargain. It is a value so extraordinary that you can't match it elsewhere. Just compare it with the serge dresses you see priced at $7.50 and $10.00 and judge for yourself how co-operation brings prices down.

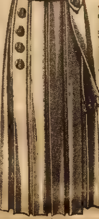
Co-operative Price **$4.87**

Order by No. XB1376. Don't send a penny. Pay on arrival. We pay the postage.


Let the Prices and Qualities Prove What Co-operation Does
Give Your Size

Co-operation Gives You This Skirt For Only

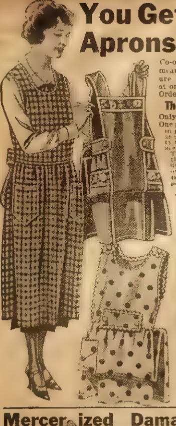
$2.48



We challenge the world to equal this skirt bargain. You should snap it up quickly. Made of good wool mixed Panama cloth in snappy style pleated all round. Trimmed with 4 large buttons on side and 1 on belt. All-round belt ends in tab ornamented with 4 button ornaments. Handsome, well made. Color navy blue. Sizes [illegible] to 32 waist, 32 to 38 length. Basted hem. **Order Now.** When you [illegible] you should [illegible] is a [illegible]. You will be moved to wear it. Send before the stock is sold.

No. XB1692. Don't send a penny. Pay on arrival. Co-operative price $2.48. We pay the postage.

You Get All Three Aprons for only $1.69



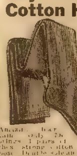
Co-operation surely means giving full measure. Look at this set of 3 aprons priced at only $1.69. And don't wait too long. Order while they last.

The Co-operators Save You Money

Only this little price and you get all 3. One gingham, one percale and one linene in pretty designs and cut full and roomy as shown in the picture. Standard quality, well made aprons that any woman can see are worth half again what we ask. The tremendous buying power of this great organization gives you the difference. Order these aprons alone or include with other goods.

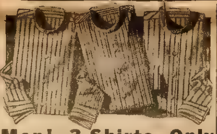
Order by No. XB1934. Don't send a penny. Pay on arrival. Co-operative price $1.69. We pay the postage.

Boys' Strong Cotton Hose 3 pairs 79c



Amazing bargain, only 79c brings 3 pairs of these strong cotton hose. Double sole and toe with high spliced heel. Color black. Sizes 6 to 11.

No. XE260. Don't send a penny. Pay on arrival. Co-operative price for 3 pairs 79c. We pay postage.

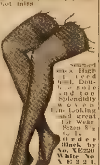


Men! 3 Shirts, Only $2.75

Here's a knockout on high shirt prices—a victory for co-operation. 3 classy, 5 button coat style shirts in neat striped percale. Double cuffs. Cut roomy and well made. The set of 3 for the 1 price. See them at our risk and if you don't say it's the biggest shirt value you ever saw send them back. **Order by No. XM1258. Don't send a penny. Pay on arrival. Price for all 3 shirts $2.75. We pay the postage.**

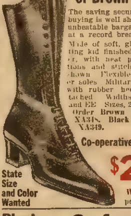
3 Pairs Fine Hose 98c

A splendid quality of full mercerized cotton hose [illegible] which gives you a bargain you simply must not miss.



Seamed back. High spliced heel. Double sole and toe. Splendidly woven, fine looking and great for wear. Sizes 8½ to 10. Order Black by No. XE220. White No. XE221. Cordovan No. XE222. **Don't send a penny. Pay on arrival. Price for 3 Pairs 98c. We pay postage.**

Sensational Price Making on Black or Brown Hi-Cut Boots


State Size and Color Wanted

The saving secured through collective buying is well shown in this absolutely unbeatable bargain. A wonderful shoe at a record breaking price.

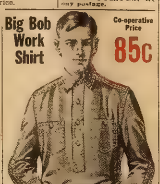
Made of soft, glove fitting kid finished leather, with neat perforations and stitching as shown. Flexible leather soles. Military heels with rubber heels attached. Widths D, E and EE. Sizes, 2½ to 8. **Order Brown by No. XA348. Black by No. XA349.**

Co-operative Price **$2.45**

We pay postage.

Big Bob Work Shirt

Co-operative Price **85c**



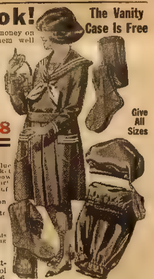
The World's Best Work Shirt Bargain

Every man should order at least 3 of these famous Big Bob Work Shirts. Think of it, only 85c each. That's how co-operation makes your dollars bigger in buying power. Made of genuine chambray. Double stitched seams. 2 roomy breast pockets with reinforced facing to close with button and button hole. Open double cuffs with reinforcement to button through. Roomy collar and arm holes. Color blue. Sizes 14 to 17. **Order by No. XM1214. Don't send a penny. Pay on arrival. Price 85c each; 3 for $2.50. We pay postage.**

Mothers, Look!

See how co-operation helps you to save money on the children's clothing and to keep them well dressed in good quality stylish garments

Girls' Complete 5-Piece Outfit
(A Vanity Case FREE)


The Vanity Case Is Free
Give All Sizes

Positively the most amazing value in girls' outfits ever offered. Your opportunity to dress the child from head to foot for only $2.98. Surely you will not miss such a chance.

Co-operative Price **$2.98**

Ideal School Clothes

Sailor Style Dress, good quality Navy blue serge with sailor collar, cuffs and pocket trimmed with 3 rows white braid. Red bow tie. Shield with emblem. Box plaited skirt.

Black Sateen Bloomers of fine quality. Ruffle at knee.

2 Pairs Stockings, fine gauge, black cotton combed yarn.

Tam, choice of red or navy cloth. (State which color you want.)

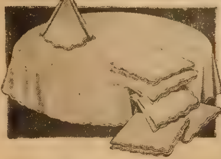
Sizes 7 to 14 Years

FREE. Beautiful fitted Vanity Case. This comes with the outfit. Something the little miss will be proud to carry.

Send Your Order NOW

We provided a large supply of these outfits but they are going fast, and school time is nearly here. Order by No. XB1196. **Don't send a penny. Pay on arrival. Price for all 5 garments $2.98. We pay postage.**

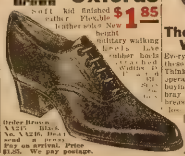
Mercer-ized Damask Table Set



Co-operative Price **98c**

A bleached pure white, plain woven mercerized cotton damask set beautifully scalloped in blue embroidery. [illegible] every [illegible]. Table cloth [illegible] about 57 inches. Half dozen napkins [illegible] 18x18 inches. **Order by No. XK1040. Don't send a penny. Pay on arrival. Price, set 7 pieces 98c. We pay postage.**

Black or Brown Oxfords



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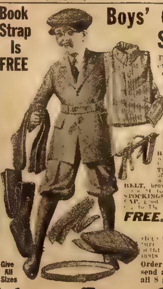

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Wooden Spoil

(Continued From Page 4)

at least before we can put you in possession of your land," protested the notary. "You do not understand the formalities——"

"I shall put myself in possession, Monsieur Lamartine. At least, nobody can take it away from me."

"But it is entirely irregular, Mr. Askew. Really——"

"Let me have the papers, please," said Hilary, smiling. "And you need have no fear that you will be held responsible for my anticipating my inheritance. I imagine I have as much right there as Mr. Morris."

"Of course, if that is your decision, there is nothing more to say," answered the other brusquely. He pulled out a drawer and removed an envelope containing some documents. "You will find the statement here," he said. "Mr. Morris has the books and the map at St. Boniface. I wish you a pleasant journey, sir. You wish me to continue to represent you?"

"For the present, yes. Good day."

WHEN he was gone Monsieur Lamartine sat back in his chair and drummed his fingers for nearly a minute. Then he called up Brousseau.

"He just gone," he said. "And he starts for St Boniface tomorrow morning, in spite of all my representations."

He smiled at the sputtering that came over the wire.

"You had better wait and go up with Morris," he said. "Two heads are better than one, especially when one is inflammable. Come here with Morris as soon as he arrives, and we'll talk the situation over. Mr. Askew won't learn very much if he does get to St. Boniface ahead of you, unless your man Connell talks, and I understand he is reliable. I suggest that you get Connell on the telephone tonight and advise him of Mr. Askew's projected visit, and you can give him his instructions."

CHAPTER II.

LOOKING THINGS OVER.

IT WAS well into the afternoon when Hilary reached St. Boniface on the small tri-weekly mail-boat. For fifty or sixty miles below Quebec the country, sparsely inhabited tho it is, and primitive, contains settlements with shingled houses, hotels, tourists in season, and it was not until the St. Lawrence widened into the Gulf that Hilary realized, almost with surprise, that the ship was sailing into a territory as primitive as it had been a score of years after Jacques Cartier landed. The settlements were mere clusters of cabins of blackened wood, with moss-stuffed interstices, nestling into the hollows of the immense hills that bordered the water. The south shore was invisible in the distant haze. Something of the primeval nature of the land entered Hilary's heart and gripped it.

His ancestors had been seafaring people, before Josiah Askew, rich with the human spoil of Africa, acquired religion and settled down in the Massachusetts seaside village where he laid the foundations of his fortune. Hilary realized that the old instinct, suppressed but cropping out unexpectedly in his father, the importer, who sometimes made unaccountable journeys on his own vessels, had burst out in him.

He had suspected this vaguely for a long time. His journeys to the estates of various millionaires, to which he always looked forward, had always left him with a sense of dissatisfaction. He had never known what it was he wanted. But he knew now: it was to take hold of a virgin land and tame it, to grapple with life, not among the men of cities, but somewhere with the smell of the pines and of the brown earth in his nostrils. Pacing the deck of the little ship, he felt that his desires had come to light at the moment when their fulfilment had become possible.

HE LOOKED about him with approval when he stood upon the porch of the tiny hotel at St. Boniface. He saw the gray waters of the St. Lawrence before him, with the gulls, shiny of wing, hovering and dipping over them. Beyond him was the haze that veiled the distant south shore, where civilization lay. On either side extended the great hills, crested with evergreens, among which, here and there, were the white trunks of the birches, whose leaves were already beginning to be touched with the red and gold of late August. The narrow beach, along which straggled raspberry briers, was coated with chips from the pulp mill, borne out to sea from the flume and carried back, to be strewn in successive layers there, by the incoming tides

A mile or so to the west Hilary saw, in a curving bay, the end of the flame, a structure on wooden posts that ran into the water beside the wharf, at which lay a large schooner. Beyond that, on a distant point, was the red-capped white pillar of the lighthouse. Between the north and south shores was a long, narrow island, densely wooded.

Nobody else had got off the boat at St. Boniface, and evidently the landlord expected nobody. After an ineffectual attempt to enter into conversation with him, in which hardly a word was mutually intelligible, Hilary gave up the effort and started up the hill road which led, he surmised, toward the lumber mill.

He saw it from the cliff. St. Boniface appeared to be the name of a district rather than a village, for the cabins straggled away at lengthening intervals all along the road, for at least a mile on each side. Behind him was the church; in front, beyond a dip in the road, where a foaming torrent was spanned by a rattletrap bridge, was the flume, with the store and the mill offices beside it, and a cluster of workmen's cottages, little more than shacks, about these.

The whole settlement was gathered about the shores of the little bay. Beyond it were the mountains, on either side the forest-clad hills, broken, on the east, by an inlet, and on the west by the deep cleft of the Rocky River, whose mouth, closed by a boom, was a congested mass of logs.

Hilary crossed the bridge and approached the mill. Two or three men, lounging outside the store, looked at him without any sign of interest. A mongrel dog, lying in the sun, raised its head, gave one yelp at him, and went to sleep again. Everything was very still and peaceful; there was hardly a sound to be heard except the distant hum of the mill machinery, and a quick rattling, almost like the discharge of a maxim gun, which Hilary adjudged correctly to be caused by the logs from the flume falling into the hold of the lumber schooner.

Between the dam and the store, upon a terrain heaped with tin cans and miscellaneous debris, were piles of wood in four-foot lengths, each comprising about two hundred cords. Kneeling at the narrow end of one of these piles was a little man, whose clean-shaven upper lip, the whiteness of which contrasted with a sun-blackened face, indicated that a mustache had grown there recently. He was scaling, or measuring, the pile, and muttering as he added up his figures. Hilary walked up and stood beside him.

"How many cords are there in one of these piles?" he asked.

"Two hundred," muttered the other, shaking his head without looking up, and continuing his sum. Hilary surveyed the lumber. It was unrossed, and most of it was black spruce; there was also some white spruce and a little pine. The mass in the river, if it consisted of wood of the same quality, hardly substantiated Lamartine's statements.

"You seem to have some good spruce on the seigniory," said Hilary

The little man leaped to his feet, waving his arms. "What you want here?" he demanded. "Strangers are not permitted on the company's property. If you want to buy at the store, you go by the road."

Hilary looked down coolly at the excited little man. "That's an unusual order," he said. "Why?"

"It's Mr. Morris' orders, I've got to have them obeyed. I'm the time-keeper."

"I'm going to change that order," answered Hilary. "In future you'll let anybody come and look on who wants to."

The little man opened his mouth and gaped at him. "Who are you?" he inquired, with a suspicion of sarcasm in his tone. "The clerk of Monsieur Lamartine, maybe? It don't make no difference."

"I'm Mr. Askew, and I've come to take swered.

The little man was this time bereft of vocal powers for quite some time.

"But Mr. Morris, he ain't here," he gasped at length

"Well, he ought to be here. That's what I'm paying him for," said Hilary. "What's your name?"

"Jean-Marie Baptiste. You ain't lying to me, are you?"

"No, I'm not lying. Perhaps you didn't expect me, Monsieur Baptiste?"

"Noly Name, no! It was said that you had sold out to the company."

"What company?" demanded Hilary.

"The company at Ste. Marie. Monsieur Brousseau's company."

"See here, Baptiste," said Hilary, taking the other by the arm. "Let us begin by understanding each other. I know nothing about any company except myself. I own this district, the land, the timber, the mill. Have you got that?"

Jean-Marie gaped again, and then diplomatically disengaged himself.

"I guess you want to see Mr. Connell, the foreman," he said. "It ain't my job. Mr. Morris hires me. If you pay me my wages you can hire me too. You'll find Mr. Connell in the store," he added

"Bring him here," said Hilary. "Tell him I'm waiting for him. And Baptiste——"

"Monsieur."

"I don't like waiting. Hurry!" said Hilary.

The little man departed at a trot, quite evidently startled and scared, and casting back comical looks from time to time over his shoulder as he went.

His statement in the store must have created a good deal of sensation, for presently two clerks, as well as the two loungers, who had gone inside, came to the door and stared. Disengaging himself from among these came the foreman, a tall, lean, lanky New Englander, whose deliberate slouch and typical bearing warmed Hilary's heart instantly. He knew the type, knew it as only one with the New England blood knows his own

"I'm Lafe Connell, at your service, Mr. Askew," said the foreman, coming up to Hilary and standing respectfully before him.

"I suppose I should have let you people know that I was coming," said Hilary.

He wondered why Lafe Connell whistled; he knew nothing about Brousseau's telephoned warning.

"I guess you'll find things upset a little," said Connell. "Mr. Morris has been away for a couple of weeks, seeing to his other interests, and I can't exactly do much for you till he comes back. But I guess you can go into the office and make yourself at home there, Mr. Askew," he continued, a flash of humor irradiating his face as he jerked his thumb toward the tin-roofed shanty. "It's about knocking-off time, tho," he added, looking at his watch. "It's our slack month, you know, Mr. Askew. The men don't go into the woods until September, and we don't keep a large force employed on the mill work. Most of our hands are working on the south shore, or home on the farms, so there ain't really much doing."

"Tomorrow's soon enough to start in," said Hilary. "I'm pleased to have met you, Mr. Connell."

"Wait a minute," said the foreman. "If you don't mind having me, I'll get my coat and go up to the hotel with you. I'm bunking there for a few days till my landlady"—he looked toward the shanties and again smiled faintly at his own words—"gets her house fixed up. She had a fire. And maybe there'll be some things you'll want to ask me."

"All right," said Hilary.

Lafe Connell hurried back to the store, to which Jean-Marie Baptiste had already drifted. The storekeeper, his clerk, and the two loungers burst into excited chatter. Lafe, who did not know a word of French, in spite of his position, but controlled the hands thru Baptiste, left the little man to deal with them, and put on his coat, shrugging his shoulders grimly. Jean-Baptiste accompanied him a little way from the door.

"I guess you find out why he come here, like Monsieur Brousseau told you," he volunteered.

"Oh, shucks! What's the use?" responded Lafe wearily. "Either he's come to sell, in which case there ain't nothing to be found out, or else he's come to stay, and he finds how we've run things and fires the whole outfit. I tell you honestly, Baptiste, it's times like this that makes me wish I was back in Shoeburyport."

"Oh, it ain't so bad, Lafe," answered the little Frenchman optimistically.

He left him, and Lafe Connell rejoined Hilary. They went together silently across the shaking bridge and ascended the hill, each quietly taking stock of the other. At the top, where a branch road ran off at right angles to that which crested the cliff, a figure on horseback appeared in the distance. The two men stopped to take breath for a few moments, and to give the rider passage.

IT WAS a girl, riding side-saddle. As the horse drew near she pulled in to take the branch road without scattering the dust, passing within a few feet of Hilary. He saw that she was about 20 years of age, or a little more, slight, very straight upon the saddle, with gray-blue eyes and brown hair blown by the wind about her flushed cheeks.

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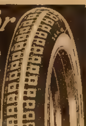

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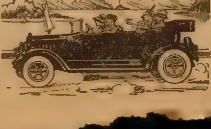

Her profile as she turned was charming; but the whole picture of the girl on the horse was charming, even more than it was beautiful. There was a combination of dignity and simplicity about her, both in her demeanor and in the way she rode, and in her acknowledgment of Connell's greeting.

Hilary watched her canter up the road till she had disappeared among the trees. Then he realized that he had not taken his eyes off her since he had first seen her.

"That," said Lafe, "is Mamzelle Madeeline Rosny. Her father's what they call the Seigneur."

"The owner of the Chateau?" asked Hilary, altho he knew this perfectly.

"Yes, Mr. Askew. I guess she wouldn't have smiled so pleasant if she had known who you was."

"Why, Mr. Connell?"

Lafe jerked his thumb vaguely about the horizon. "Proud old boy," he explained. "Family's been here nigh on a thousand years, I guess—leastways, since them Frenchmen first come to this continent. Hated like thunder to sell out to your uncle. But I guess he was land poor, like the rest of them, and Mamzelle Madeleine must have cost him a mint of money finishing up in the convent at Paris, France."

Hilary turned this over in his mind as they continued their walk along the cliff and then down the road to the hotel. The idea of any personal ill-feeling on the Seigneur's part or on that of his family had not occurred to him. Tho he did not expect to meet Monsieur Rosny, except possibly in the course of his business, he was conscious of a feeling of regret, and also of a half-formed resolution, the nature of which he would not admit, to put relations upon a pleasant footing.

"The Seigneur's house is at the end of that road we passed?" he asked Lafe, as they neared the hotel.

"A mile or so," said Lafe. "Queer place to build a house in the middle of the woods. Chateau they call it. It's a queer old place, Mr. Askew, like some of them we got in New England. Used to be laid out with a big garden, and terraces, I'm told, when old Mrs. Rosny was living. But since she's died it's gone more or less to rack and ruin. The old man, he don't care, and Mamzelle Madeleine's thinking of other things than living here all her life, I guess."

In the hotel the landlord's wife was already preparing supper. They ate an omelet, washed down with strong tea and followed by raspberries and cream. Then they went out on the porch and lit their pipes.

"You are the foreman, I understand?" asked Hilary.

"Yes, Mr. Askew. I took the job soon after your uncle bought the timber rights. I'd been up here for the Shoeburyport Gazette, which was looking for a pulp supply. Mr. Morris offered me the job, and I took it. And I've been sorry ever since."

"Why?"

"It's a hell of a country," answered Lafe frankly. "I never guessed such folks existed in a civilized land before. Now you take a Dutchman or a Dago—their ways ain't our ways, but they're more or less human. These people ain't. They paint their houses yellow and green, when they paint 'em at all. I never saw a yellow house with a green porch in my life till I come up here."

"Just a difference of taste, Mr. Connell."

"Maybe," said Lafe, spitting. "Maybe it's all right not to have sense to plaster their houses, so as to freeze to death in winter time. Maybe it's all right to run to Father Lucy when there's a forest fire, instead of getting to work and putting it out. Maybe he can pray it out for them. Maybe it's all right for them schooners to have the front mast higher than the back, and for it to rain for six weeks at a time without stopping when it starts to rain, because it's got set, like these folks, and hasn't sense to stop. I got nothing against the place, except that my wife Clarice and the kids are in Shoeburyport, and I'd rather rot here alone than bring 'em up. But what's the use? I'm here and I got to stay here," he ended, shrugging his shoulders

"You're under contract?" asked Hilary.

"By the year. I told Mr. Morris I'd get out on the first of October, but I said that last year, and the year before. I guess I'm here for another year now, till I get my home in Shoeburyport paid for."

Lafe was a bad cross-questioner, and the task put upon him by Brousseau was not only uncongenial but impossible for a man of his temperament. However, he made a valiant attempt to draw Hilary out. "You're thinking of spending some time here, Mr. Askew?" he asked.

"I've come up to take charge. I'm going to stay," said Hilary.

LAFE looked at him curiously. What sort of a man could this be who chose of his volition to reside in St. Boniface?

"I guess you'll change your mind when you've seen it a little longer," he said incredulously.

"On the contrary, Mr. Connell, I mean to take hold, and I mean to make it pay. It hasn't paid very well, I understand?"

Lafe floundered. "Of course I don't know nothing about the financial end," he said. "I've heard it don't pay as much as it ought."

"I understand that most of the timber is below the size at which cutting is allowed."

Lafe stared at him. "Why, them rules are for Government land!" he answered. "You can cut any size on freehold. The timber ain't so bad—leastways, some of it ain't."

Hilary began to think hard. On this point Lamartine had clearly and definitely lied to him.

"Too much fir in the property?" he asked.

"Why, there is some fir," conceded Lafe. "But there's some good spruce along the Rocky River," he added, again oblivious of his instructions.

"I saw a good pile in the river."

"Why, that ain't our cutting—not much of it," said Lafe. "Most of that comes from the Ste. Marie limits. They got some mighty good spruce there, Mr. Askew," he addd, with the woodsman's appreciation of good timber.

"Where is Ste. Marie?"

"Ste. Marie's two miles along the coast, beyond our settlement," said Lafe. "Most of our hands come from there. There's quite a town, of a sort, sprung up since the company started. It's a tough place, Mr. Askew. I seen some tough towns in the West, but this has got 'em all beat, with the smuggling of brandy, and the drinking, and the fights every Saturday night—there was a man knifed there last week; and not a policeman within fifty miles, and nobody except Father Lucy, and he can't hold 'em."

"What I want to know," said Hilary, "is, what this company is that you speak about, and how they come to use the Rocky River for their logs."

Lafe hesitated, but only for a moment. Then he mentally cast Brosseau to the winds; and, after all, if Hilary meant to know, nobody could prevent it, Brousseau's instructions notwithstanding.

"It's this way, Mr. Askew," he said. "Mr. Morris and Mr. Brousseau have a company of their own. Their limits touch ours on the west, across the river, and run ten miles or so back into the bush, right alongside ours. They got the right to float their logs down the river."

"And use the mill?"

"Mr. Morris leases the use of our mill by the year to the company."

Hilary was staggered for the moment. Morris, as his uncle's manager, leasing the mill to Morris, a partner in Brousseau's company, seemed a queer role. But Lafe could not see his face in the darkness, and, puffing at his pipe, he fell into a silence covering who knows what dreams of Shoeburyport?

"How do they tell our lumber from theirs?" asked Hilary presently.

"Oh, that ain't hard," said Lafe. "You see, the jobbers, who sublease the tracts, know how much their men have cut. And it's scaled in the woods before they shoot it down stream. I guess there ain't no difficulty there, Mr. Askew. And you see, Mr. Morris representing both concerns he naturally does his best by both of 'em."

His volubility, which was, in fact, a mental reparation to Brosseau, was too unlike his taciturnity of nature to impress Hilary, whose suspicions, dormant even after the interview with Lamartine, were now thoroly aroused.

"And Mr. Brosseau has no concern with us, except for the lease of the mill and the right of way down the river," mused Hilary. "Who is this Mr. Brousseau?"

"Why, I guess he's the big man of the district," said Lafe. "He's the nearest thing to a boss they've got up here: tells 'em how to vote and gets 'em out of trouble. He's got a fine house over on the hill, between Ste. Marie and St. Boniface. He ain't good to his father, tho. That was old Jacques Brousseau in the store, the trapper."

"I didn't see him."

"With the face like an old Indian. He was Mr. Rosny's slave, or whatever they called them, in the old times, before these people became free. And he's as proud as a peacock about his son, tho he won't have him about his place. Yep, Mr. Brousseau's done well for himself; and he's going to do better."

He tapped the ashes out of his pipe and pocketed it.

"He's got old Rosny in his pocket," he said, leaning toward Hilary. "He's got him bound and mortgaged after leading him to throw your uncle's money away in crazy investments. He did it deliberately, Mr. Askew. When he was a kid, growing up among the house servants up at the Chateau, he wanted to be a big man, for which I don't blame him. He got his way, but that wasn't enough. He wanted the Seigneur's place, because he found that the folks up here thought more of old Mr. Rosny, with his broken-down house and debts, than they did of him with all his money. So he set to work and got him cinched.

"The old man hates and despises him, and he's been fighting against it for a long time, but he seen what's coming to him and I guess he's made up his mind he'll have to stomach it. Brousseau's staked old Rosny's pride against his love, and I guess he's won his stake and won Manzelle Madeleine into the bargain."

He rose. "That'll be all for tonight, Mr. Askew?" he asked.

Hilary rose, too. "Thanks, Mr. Connell," he said. "In the morning I shall ask you to show me around the place."

"If it's your orders, Mr. Askew, I guess we can get Mr. Tremblay's rig."

"It's my orders," said Hilary.

He did not follow Lafe Connell inside the hotel, but sat upon the porch, musing, and listening to the crescendo of the breakers as the tide drove them upward along the shore. Lafe had enlightened him on several points. He doubted whether Lamartine had spoken anything approaching truth concerning the property, and he was sure that Morris and Brousseau were the company in whose behalf he had offered forty-five thousand dollars. There would be need of a good many explanations from Morris.

Yet Hilary felt instinctively that it was Brousseau, not Morris, with whom he would have to contend. He formed a mental picture of some vulgarian, a nauveau-riche, who, having eaten his way into the house of his former master, planned the crushing debacle to his hopes and pride.

On the face of the soft night rose the face of Madeleine Rosny painted with surprising clearness. He saw the blue of her eyes, the curve of her flushed cheek, the dignity and gentleness and pride that blended in her looks. If ever he had any quarrel with Brousseau, he would show him. . . .

Then he cursed himself for a fool, and, entering the hotel, took his lamp and went up to his room.

Lafe had not yet gone to bed. Incapable of speaking a single connected sentence in French, he had the gift of many unlettered men of communicating his meaning to one ignorant of his language, as he of his. He was chatting with Monsieur Tremblay, the landlord, in his kitchen.

"Yep, he's the owner of the St. Boniface timber rights," he said. "The boss, you know, Tremblay. Comprenny? Mr. Askew—boss—runs the whole show. And he says he's going to stay. I guess he'll change his tune when he's seen some of these pink and green verandas round here, like yours. It beats me

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what in the world got into your head to make you put a green veranda on a yellow house, Tremblay.

"If I thought he'd make good on what he said I'd loosen up a bit. That fellow Brousseau's getting a bit too big for my taste, and the squeak of them shoes of his gets on my nerves every time I hear 'em. And he had the nerve to tell me to do a dirty job for him—him that never employed me, nor couldn't, if he was to go down on his knees in them squeaky shoes of his and beg me to. But what's the use? Mr. Askew'll be hiking back to the States this day week, and then I'd be up against it."

CHAPTER III.

LAFE CONNELL EXPLAINS.

AFTER breakfast the next morning Hilary hired Monsieur Tremblay's buggy and started out with Lafe, with the intention of covering a portion of the limits and seeing the operations of the jobbers; he also meant to keep his eyes open as to the nature of the timber.

Altho it was not yet September, the jobbers were already in the woods with nucleus gangs, staking out the tracts they had leased for the ensuing year, dating from the first of October, and superintending the removal of old camps or the construction of new ones. The buggy crossed the bridge, but, instead of proceeding along the road to the store, Lafe turned to the left thru the St. Boniface settlement. The dusty streets between the rows of unpainted shacks were thronged with children, and women came from their stoves to stand upon the porches and stare at the new owner, concerning whose arrival all the village had already been informed. Soon, however, they were clear of the cabins, and the pony was puffing up a hill of incredible grade, beneath the overhanging branches of tall conifers, while Rocky River roared thru the gorge on their left, beneath them.

As the rig passed the last cabin Lafe pointed to a tall old man with a face the color of tanned leather, who sat in the doorway, mending a pair of moccasins.

"That's Jacques Brousseau," he said. "He's beginning to wake up now. He sits and dreams all summer, till trapping time comes round and then he makes for the woods. He's trapped this district fifty years."

The buggy surmounted the hill, and another hill appeared in the distance. Here and there, scattered along the roadside, were solitary cabins, with little patches of cultivated ground about them.

"And on the right of the road is the Ste. Marie territory?" asked Hilary.

"Yep, Mr. Askew. The two runs neck and neck back into them mountains. We turn off presently. We haven't touched this district yet."

"There's plenty of good spruce here," said Hilary.

Lafe did not answer. A dip in the road carried them across a bridge spanning a wide creek that united here with Rocky River. They were now traveling inside the limits of the seigniory, with the creek on their left hand and the river on the right. Hilary noted the the first growth spruce along the banks.

"Why don't we cut this, anyway, if the rest is mainly fir?" he asked. "There's enough lumber here to fill our dam instead of the Ste. Marie company's logs."

Lafe answered volubly, but did not meet Hilary's eyes.

"You see, Mr. Askew," he began to explain, "it's this way. There's a good deal of fir on our property, and what pine and spruce there is is smallish. There was a big fire over this district fifteen years or so ago. Now Mr. Morris calculates that if we go slow for a while and give the trees a chance to grow, they'll be worth twice as much in a few years. We're developing the property slowly, Mr. Askew——"

Hilary's hand fell on Lafe's shoulder. "Connell," he said, "I brought you up here with me to learn the truth from you. You're going to sign on again on October first, and it's me you're going to sign with, not Mr. Morris. Now tell me the facts about all this."

Part two of this gripping serial, which will well repay all readers who follow it to its final chapters, will appear in the next number of the Ledger. It will prove to be a remarkable story of considerable length, but none who love a live contest in which a courageous young American fights for his rights against a band of powerful financial conspirators will fail to appreciate this really brilliant Ledger offering. Another big installment next week.

Riders of the Purple Sage

(Continued From Page 9)

clear sight failed her. Dizzily, in a blur, she saw the Bishop's hand jerk to his hip. She saw gleam of blue and spout of red. In her ears burst a thundering report. The court floated in darkening circles around her, and she fell into utter blackness.

The darkness lightened, turned to slow-drifting haze, and lifted. Thru a thin film of blue smoke she saw the rough-hewn timbers of the court roof. A cool, damp touch moved across her brow. She smelled powder, and it was that which galvanized her suspended thought. She moved, to see that she lay prone upon the stone flags with her head on Lassiter's knee, and he was bathing her brow with water from the stream. The same swift glance, shifting low, brought into range of her sight a smoking gun and splashes of blood.

"Ah-h!" she moaned, and was drifting, sinking again into darkness, when Lassiter's voice arrested her.

"It's all right, Jane. It's all right."

"Did—you—kill—him?" she whispered.

"Who? That fat party who was here? No, I didn't kill him."

"Oh! . . . Lassiter!"

"Say! It was queer for you to faint. I thought you were such a strong woman, not faintish like that. You're all right now—only some pale. I thought you'd never come to. But I'm awkward round women folks. I couldn't think of anythin'."

"Lassiter! . . . the gun there! . . . the blood!"

"So that's troublin' you. I reckon it needn't. You see it was this way. I come round the house an' seen that fat party an' heard him talkin' loud. Then he seen me, an' very impolite goes straight for his gun. He oughtn't have tried to throw a gun on me—whatever his reason was. For that's meetin' me on my own grounds. I've seen runnin' molasses that was quicker'n him. Now I didn't know who he was, visitor or friend or relation of yours tho I seen he was a Mormon all over, an' I couldn't get serious about shootin'. So I winged him—put a bullet thru his arm as he was pullin' at his gun. An' he dropped the gun there, an' a little blood. I told him he'd introduced himself sufficient, an' to please move out of my vicinity. An' he went."

LASSITER spoke with slow, cool, soothing voice, in which there was a hint of levity, and his touch, as he continued to bathe her brow, was gentle and steady. His impassive face, and the kind, gray eyes, further stilled her agitation.

"He drew on you first, and you deliberately shot to cripple him—you wouldn't kill him—you—Lassiter?"

"That's about the size of it."

Jane kissed his hand.

All that was calm and cool about Lassiter instantly vanished.

"Don't do that! I won't stand it! An' I don't care a d—n who that fat party was."

He helped Jane to her feet and to a chair. Then with the wet scarf he had used to bathe her face he wiped the blood from the stone flags, and, picking up the gun, he threw it upon a couch. With that he began to pace the court, and his silver spurs jangled musically, and the great gun-sheaths softly brushed against his leather chaps.

"So—it's true—what I heard him say?" Lassiter asked, presently halting before her. "You made love to me—to bind my hands?"

"Yes," confessed Jane. It took all her woman's courage to meet the gray storm of his glance.

"All these days that you've been so friendly an' like a pardner—all these evenin's that have been so bewilderin' to me—your beauty—an'—an' the way you looked an' came close to me—they were woman's tricks to bind my hands?"

"Yes."

"An' your sweetness that seemed so natural, an' your throwin' little Fay an' me so much together—to make me love the child—all that was for the same reason?"

"Yes."

Lassiter flung his arms—a strange gesture for him.

"Mebbe it wasn't much in your Mormon thinkin', for you to play that game. But to ring the child in—that was hellish!"

Jane's passionate, unheeding zeal began to loom darkly.

"Lassiter, whatever my intention in the beginning, Fay loves you dearly—and I—I've grown to—to like you."

"That's powerful kind of you, now," he said. Sarcasm and scorn made his voice that of a stranger. "An' you sit there an' look me straight in the eyes! You're a wonderful strange woman, Jane Withersteen."

"I'm not ashamed, Lassiter. I told you I'd try to change you."

"Would you mind tellin' me just what you tried?"

"I tried to make you see beauty in me and be softened by it. I wanted you to care for me so that I could influence you. It wasn't easy. At first you were stone-blind. Then I hoped you'd love little Fay, and thru that come to feel the horror of making children fatherless."

"Jane Withersteen, either you're a fool or noble beyond my understandin'. Mebbe you're both. I know you're blind. What you meant is one thing—what you did was to make me love you."

"Lassiter!"

"I reckon I'm a human bein', tho I never loved any one but my sister, Milly Erne. That was long——"

"Oh, are you Milly's brother?"

"Yes, I was, an' I loved her. There never was any one but her in my life till now. Didn't I tell you that long ago I back-trailed myself from women? I was a Texas ranger till—till Milly left home, an' then I became somethin' else—Lassiter! For years I've been a lonely man set on one thing. I came here an' met you. An' now I'm not the man I was. The change was gradual, an' I took no notice of it. I understand now that never-satisfied longin' to see you, listen to you, watch you, feel you near me. It's plain now why you were never out of my thoughts. I've had no thoughts but of you. I've lived an' breathed for you. An' now when I know what it means—what you've done—I'm burnin' up with hell's fire!"

"Oh, Lassiter—no—no—you don't love me that way!" Jane cried.

"If that's what love is, then I do."

"Forgive me! I didn't mean to make you love me like that. Oh, what a tangle of our lives! You—Milly Erne's brother! And I—heedless, mad to melt your heart toward Mormons. Lassiter, I may be wicked, but not wicked enough to hate. If I couldn't hate Tull, could I hate you?"

"After all, Jane, mebbe you're only blind—Mormon blind. That only can explain what's close to selfishness——"

"I'm not selfish. I despise the very word. If I were free——"

"But you're not free. Not free of Mormonism. An' in playin' this game with me you've been unfaithful.

"Un-faithful!" faltered Jane.

"Yes, I said unfaithful. You're faithful to your Bishop an' unfaithful to yourself. You're false to your womanhood, an' true to your religion. But for a saving innocence you'd have made yourself low an' vile—betrayin' yourself, betrayin' me—all to bind my hands an' keep me from snuffin' out Mormon life. It's your d—d Mormon blindness."

"Is it vile—is it blind—is it only Mormonism to save human life? No, Lassiter, that's God's law, divine, universal for all Christians."

"The blindness I mean is blindness that keeps you from seein' the truth. I've known many good Mormons. But some are blacker than hell. You won't see that even when you know it. Else, why all this blind passion to save the life of that—that . . ."

Jane shut out the light, and the hands she held over her eyes trembled and quivered against her face.

"Blind—yes, an' let me make it clear an' simple to you," Lassiter went on, his voice losing its tone of anger. "Take, for instance, that idea of yours last night when you wanted my guns. It was good an' beautiful, an' showed your heart—but—why, Jane, it was crazy. Mind, I'm assumin' that life to me is as sweet as to any other man. An' to preserve that life is each man's first an' closest thought. Where would any man be on this border without guns? Where, especially, would Lassiter be? Well, I'd be under the sage with thousands of other men now livin', an' sure better men than me. Gun-packin' in the West since the Civil War has growed into a kind of moral law. An' out here on this border it's the difference between a man 'an' somethin' not a man. Look what your takin' Venters' guns from him all but made him! Why, your churchmen carry guns. Tull has killed a man an' drawed on others. Your Bishop has shot a half dozen men, an' it wasn't thru prayers of his that they recovered. An' today he'd have shot me if he'd been quick enough on the draw. Could I walk or ride down into Cottonwoods without my guns? This is a wild time, Jane Withersteen, this year of our Lord 1871."

"No time—for a woman!" exclaimed Jane, brokenly. "Oh, Lassiter, I feel helpless—lost—and don't know where to turn. If I am blind—then—I need some one—a friend—you, Lassiter—more than ever!"

"Well, I didn't say nothin' about goin' back on you, did I?"

CHAPTER XII.

THE INVISIBLE HAND

JANE received a letter from Bishop Dyer, not in his own handwriting, which stated that the abrupt termination of their interview had left him in some doubt as to her future conduct. A slight injury had incapacitated him from seeking another meeting at present, the letter went on to say, and ended with a request which was virtually a command, that she call upon him at once.

The reading of the letter acquainted

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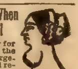

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Jane Withersteen with the fact that something within her had all but changed. She sent no reply to Bishop Dyer; nor did she go to see him. On Sunday she remained absent from the service—for the second time in years—and tho she did not actually suffer there was a dead-lock of feelings deep within her, and the waiting for a balance to fall on either side was almost as bad as suffering.

She had a gloomy expectancy of untoward circumstances, and with it a keen-edged curiosity to watch developments. She had a half-formed conviction that her future conduct—as related to her churchmen—was beyond her control and would be governed by their attitude toward her. Something was changing in her, forming, waiting for decision to make it a real and fixed thing.

She had told Lassiter that she felt helpless and lost in the fateful tangle of their lives, and now she feared that she was approaching the same chaotic condition of mind in regard to her religion.

It appalled her to find that she questioned phases of that religion. Absolute faith had been her serenity. Tho leaving hes faith unshaken, her serenity had been disturbed, and now it was broken by open war between her and her ministers. That something within her—a whisper—which she had tried in vain to hush had become a ringing voice, and it called to her to wait

She had transgressed no laws of God. Her churchmen, however, invested with the power and the glory of a wonderful creed, however they sat in inexorable judgment of her, must now practice toward her the simple, common, Christian virtue they professed to preach, "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you!"

Jane Withersteen, waiting in darkness of mind, remained faithful still. But it was darkness that must soon be pierced by light. If her faith were justified, if her churchmen were trying only to intimidate her, the fact would soon be manifest, as would their failure, and then she would redouble her zeal toward them and toward what had been the best work of her life—work for the welfare and happiness of those among whom she lived, Mormon and Gentile alike.

If that secret, intangible power closed its toils round her again, if that great invisible hand moved here and there and everywhere, slowly paralyzing her with its mystery and its inconceivable sway over her affairs, then she would know beyond doubt that it was not chance, nor jealousy, nor intimidation, nor ministerial wrath at her revolt, but a cold and calculating policy thought out long before she was born, a dark, immutable will of whose empire she and all that was hers was but an atom.

Then might come her ruin. Then might come her fall into black storm. Yet she would rise again, and to the light. God would be merciful to a driven woman who had lost her way.

A week passed. Little Fay played and prattled and pulled at Lassiter's big black guns. The rider came to Withersteen House oftener than ever. Jane saw a change in him, tho it did not relate to his kindness and gentleness. He was quieter and more thoughtful. While playing with Fay or conversing with Jane he seemed to be possessed of another self that watched with cool, roving eyes, that listened, listened always as if the murmuring amber stream brought messages, and the moving leaves whispered something

Lassiter never rode Bells into the court any more, nor did he come by the lane or the paths. When he appeared it was suddenly and noiselessly out of the dark shadow of the grove.

"I left Bells out in the sage," he said, one day at the end of that week. "I must carry water to him."

"Why not let him drink at the trough or here?" asked Jane, quickly.

"I reckon it'll be safer for me to slip thru the grove; I've been watched when I rode in from the sage."

"Watched? By whom?"

"By a man who thought he was well hid. But my eyes are pretty sharp. An', Jane," he went on, almost in a whisper, "I reckon it'd be a good idea for us to talk low. You're spied on here by your women."

"Lassiter!" she whispered in turn. "That's hard to believe. My women love me."

"What of that?" he asked. "Of course, they love you. But they're Mormon women."

Jane's old, rebellious loyalty clashed with her doubt

"I won't believe it," she replied, stubbornly.

"Well, then, just act natural an' talk natural, an' pretty soon—give them time to hear us—pretend to go over there to the table, an' then quick-like make a move for the door an' open it"

"I will," said Jane, with heightened color. Lassiter was right; he never made mistakes; he would not have told her unless he positively knew. Yet Jane was so tenacious of faith that she had to see with her own eyes, and so constituted that to employ even such small deceit toward her women made her ashamed, and angry for her shame as well as theirs.

Then a singular thought confronted her that made her hold up this simple ruse—which hurt her, tho it was well justified—against the deceit she had wittingly and eagerly used toward Lassiter. The difference was staggering in its suggestion of that blindness of which he had accused her. Fairness and justice and mercy, that she had imagined were anchor-cables to hold fast her soul to righteusness, had not been hers in the strange, biased duty that had so exalted and confounded her.

Presently Jane began to act her little part, to laugh and play with Fay, to talk of horses and cattle to Lassiter. Then she made deliberate mention of a book in which she kept records of all pertaining to her stock, and she walked slowly toward the table, and when near the door she suddenly whirled and thrust it open. Her sharp action nearly knocked down a woman who had undoubtedly been listening.

"Hester," said Jane, sternly, "you may go home, and you need not come back."

Jane shut the door and returned to Lassiter. Standing unsteadily, she put her hand on his arm. She let him see that doubt had gone, and how this stab of disloyalty pained her

"Spies! My own women! . . . Oh, miserable!" she cried, with flashing, tearful eyes.

"I hate to tell you," he replied. By that she knew he had long spared her. "It's begun again—that work in the dark."

"Nay, Lassiter—it never stopped!"

So bitter certainty claimed her at last, and trust fled Withersteen House and fled forever. The women who owed much to Jane Withersteen changed not in love for her, nor in devotion to their household work, but they poisoned both by a thousand acts of stealth and cunning and duplicity. Jane broke out once and caught them in strange, stone-faced, unhesitating falsehood. Thereafter she broke out no more. She forgave them because they were driven. Poor, fettered, and sealed Hagars, how she pities them! What terrible thing bound them and locked their lips, when they showed neither consciousness of guilt toward their benefactress nor distress at the slow wearing apart of long established and dear ties?

"The blindness again!" cried Jane Withersteen. "In my sisters as in me. . . . Oh, God!"

There came a time when no words passed between Jane and her women. Silently they went about their household duties, and secretly they went about the underhand work to which they had been bidden. The gloom of the house and the gloom of its mistress, which darkened even the bright spirit of little Fay, did not pervade these women. Happiness was not among them, but they were aloof from gloom. They spied and listened; they received and sent secret messengers; and they stole Jane's books and records, and finally the papers that were deeds of her possessions. Thru it all they were silent, rapt in a kind of trance. Then one by one, without leave or explanation or farewell, they left Withersteen House, and never returned.

Coincident with this disappearance Jane's gardeners and workers in the alfalfa fields and stable men quit her, not even asking for their wages. Of all her Mormon employes about the great ranch only Jerd remained. He went on with his duty, but talked no more of the change than if it had never occurred.

"Jerd," said Jane, "what stock you can't take care of turn out in the sage. Let your first thought be for Black Star and Night. Keep them in perfect condition. Run them every day and watch them always."

THO Jane Withersteen gave with such liberality, she loved her possessions. She loved the rich, green stretshes of alfalfa, and the farms, and the grove, and the old stone house, and the beautiful, ever-faithful amber spring, and every one of a myriad of horses and colts and burros and fowls down to the smallest rabbit that nipped her vegetables; but she loved best her noble Arabian steeds. In common with all riders of the upland sage Jane cherished two material things—the cold, sweet, brown water that made life possible in the wilderness and the horses which were a part of that life.

When Lassiter asked her what Lassiter would be without his guns he was assuming that his horse was part of himself. So Jane loved Black Star and Night because it was her nature to love all beautiful creatures—perhaps all living things; and then she loved them because she herself was of the sage and in her had been born and bred the rider's instinct to rely on his four-footed brother. And when Jane gave Jerd the order to keep her favorites trained down to the day it was a half-unconscious admission that presaged a time when she would need her fleet horses.

Jane had now, however, no leisure to brood over the coils that were closing round her. Mrs. Larkin grew weaker as the August days began; she required constant care; there was little Fay to look after; and such household work as was imperative. Lassiter put Bells in the stable with the other racers, and directed his effort to a closer attendance upon Jane. She welcomed the change. He was always at hand to help, and it was her fortune to learn that his boast of being awkward around women had its root in humility and was not true.

His great, brown hands were skilled in a multiplicity of ways which a woman might have envied. He shared Jane's work, and was of especial help to her in nursing Mrs. Larkin. The woman suffered most at night, and this often broke Jane's rest. So it came about that Lassiter would stay by Mrs. Larkin during the day, when she needed care, and Jane would make up the sleep she lost in night-watches.

Mrs. Larkin at once took kindly to the gentle Lassiter, and, without ever asking who or what he was, praised him to Jane. "He's a good man and loves children," she said. How sad to hear this truth spoken of a man whom Jane thought lost beyond all redemption! Yet ever and ever Lassiter towered above her, and behind or thru his black, sinister figure shone something luminous that strangely affected Jane. Good and evil began to seem incomprehensibly blended in her judgment. It was her belief that evil could not come forth from good; yet here was a murderer who dwarfed in gentleness, patience, and love any man she had ever known.

She had almost lost track of her more outside concerns when early one morning Judkins presented himself before her in the courtyard.

Thin, hard, burnt, bearded, with the dust and sage thick on him, with his leather wrist-bands shining from use, and his boots worn thru on the stirrup side, he looked the rider of riders. He wore two guns and carried a Winchester.

Jane greeted him with surprise and warmth, set meat and bread and drink before him; and called Lassiter out to see him. The men exchanged glances, and the meaning of Lassiter's keen inquiry and Judkins' bold reply, both unspoken, was not lost upon Jane.

"Where's your hoss?" asked Lassiter, aloud

"Left him down the slope," answered Judkins. "I footed it in a ways, an' slept last night in the sage. I went to the place you told me you most always slept, but didn't strike you."

"I moved up some, near the spring, an' now I go there nights."

"Judkins—the white herd?" queried Jane hurriedly.

"Miss Withersteen, I made proud to say I've not lost a steer. Fer a good while after thet stampede Lassiter milled we hed no trouble. Why, even the sage dogs left us. But it's begun agin—thet flashin' of lights over ridge tips, an' queer puffin' of smoke, an' then at night strange whistles an' noises. But the herd's acted magnificent. An' my boys, say, Miss Withersteen, they're only kids, but I ask no better riders. I got the laugh in the village fer takin' them out. They're a wild lot, an' you know boys hev more nerve than grown men, because they don't know what danger is. I'm not denyin' there's danger. But they glory in it, an' mebbe I like it myself—anyway, we'll stick. We're goin' to drive the herd on the far side of the first break of Deception Pass. There's a great round valley over there, an' no ridges or piles of rocks to aid these stampeders. The rains are

(Continued on Page 23.)

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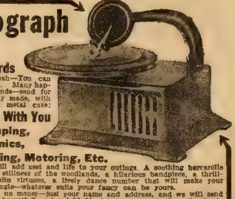

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The Crime Line

(Concluded From Page 10)

mother was dead, and I guess he could go straight to hell, for all his stepmother cared."

Caldwell shifted his position so that he could better watch the sergeant's face. In the flickering yellow glare of the open grate the harsh lines seemed less harsh now.

"And that's the same Larry that slit the old man's throat in this very room?" he queried.

"The same," mumbled his superior officer.

There was a long silence. The night wind wailed about the old house in fitful gusts. Live embers in the ancient stove flared from dull yellow to vivid red. Huge, ungainly shadows flitted like gigantic bats about the dingy, smoke-begrimed walls.

A rat scurried across the floor. A ray of light glued itself to a dark splotch on the floor, and Caldwell caught himself wondering if the splotch was the blood that Larry Martin had shed.

"Go on," he encouraged. For no good reason, a distaste for his law-enforcing task was growing upon him.

The sergeant resumed his dull monotone, as tho talking half aloud to himself:

"God only knows why Larry joined our gang. If he only hadn't! He wasn't mean and devilish like we were. Never tied up a cat and pelted it to death with catapults. Didn't even want to steal fruit at first. He'd stay outside an orchard and look after us kinda longing like, and then we'd ask him to have a great, big, juicy pear, and when he'd reach for it we'd jerk it back and eat it with smacking lips, and the juice running down. Oh, those pears! I'd like to have another real pear before I die."

Again the listener sensed a subtle import that he was too dull to comprehend.

"Can't get 'em in this rotten country," he sympathized.

The narrator laced his fingers back of his shaggy head and stared up at the somber shadows flitting about the drab ceiling.

"In a year or two Larry had learned to steal pears as fast as the next one. He learned other things, too; but we didn't get really bad—yet.

"Well, Larry and I were out stealing hickory nuts, one Sunday afternoon, when we found a purse in the road with two five-dollar bills in it. It looked like a godsend, but Larry didn't want to keep it.

"I persuaded him that we should, all the time wondering if we really should or not. And when I'd pointed out all the things that ten dollars would buy, and Larry's mouth was just watering like for new bats and balls and things, I'm darned if I didn't get cold feet about keeping it. Too late. Larry wouldn't agree to give it up then. So I told him to count me out and keep the whole ten or not, just as he pleased.

"He kept it. Denied having found it when the owner came along and questioned him. We didn't realize it at the time, but right there was the dividing line between real badness and our kiddish imitation.

"That was the crime line!

"Poor old Larry slipped over—because I persuaded him. He was arrested. He shouldered all the blame. He was locked up for ten days with tramps and thieves. Oh, it did poor Larry good; it showed him the error of his ways—not! Great God! it ruined him; it made a criminal out of a kid who was good enough at heart!"

The hardened man-hunter flung his hands up to his face, and for a moment resembled an old lady overcome with emotion. Then his hands dropped suddenly, and his voice clanged harsh and metallic:

"Some lads could have brazened it out. Larry couldn't. And how do you suppose the gang—myself and the others—helped him? Our fathers swore they'd flay us alive if we were ever seen again with the young devil who was leading us astray—think of that!—so we passed Larry up.

"Larry had done time. A dividing line had arisen, and he was on the wrong side of it. He disappeared. I didn't see him again for seven years, not till I met him at Lac la Biche, two months ago. He told me his story then."

"I'd like to hear it," said Caldwell, hugely interested. "Poor devil! I suppose he went from bad to worse."

Sergeant McMahon smiled grimly.

"Larry was still a good kid when he left his home town because he had become an outcast. He resolved to make amends. He went to the city. How was he to know that the cheap lodging-house where he put up was a hangout for petty thieves?

"At that, they didn't get him.

"He hunted for honest work and couldn't find it. To get away from a crooked bunch he gave his last two dollars to an employment agent, shipped three hundred miles to a construction camp, arrived there at midnight, starving, and learned that the contractors were laying men off, instead of taking them on.

"Crookedness wherever he turned. And him at the learning age! Well, he tramped thirty miles to the nearest town, and was flung into jail for being without visible means of support.

"He got out on his eighteenth birthday. He got in again next day. A prominent citizen had been robbed, and the police had to grab some down-and-outer. Larry spent another week at the crook's university before he was released for lack of evidence.

"At the learning age, mind you.

"Middle of winter and no work to be had; no grub to keep body and soul together. Is it any wonder he was tempted? Civilization wouldn't give an honest living. Civilization had taught him—in jail—the tricks of the thievery trade.

"What in God's name was the boy to do? Starve? Would you? Well, Larry didn't. He only sneaked a pocketful of silverware, at that—but he got five years.

"He took his sentence without a whimper. Then the glad spring broke, and he cursed himself for having given away to temptation. The seasons dragged around and spring came again. And still Larry was caged like a wild beast. And would be for four long years.

"For what?

"For taking a bit of silverware because he had to or starve. Hell! Hadn't he been punished enough? Wasn't one year in prison plenty? The confinement got on his nerves. He just had to escape. He tried—failed—got solitary confinement."

IN THE old stove before which the two officers lay on their blankets a few dull embers still glowed. Sergeant McMahon arose, picked up a can of water, and extinguished them.

Abysmal darkness, chill and sooty, blotted out the cabin interior. Caldwell could not see his hand in front of him. The moaning of the night breeze seemed to invade the room. A creepy patter of rats' feet sounded.

"Can you imagine yourself in this kind of pitch blackness day after day?" came the sergeant's voice from the inky void. "If so, you've got some idea of solitary confinement. It gets to feel as tho you were at the bottom of a deep well that's had a load of soot dumped into it.

"The choking black air grips at your gullet like a weasel.

"You call out, you yell, you scream—but it's no use. You beat on the walls till your hands are raw. A million slimy devils drive pins into your brain till all your ideas focus into one. Heaven help you if that one idea isn't a good one—and it never is.

"Down in that hell-hole all the impulses, good and bad, of Larry Martin's soul merged into one desire—revenge on happy, careless humanity outside that had tossed him into a living hell as thoughtlessly as you'd toss an insect into a red-hot stove. Something snapped in his brain. I doubt if he's been quite sane since.

"The thought of revenge bore him up till the end of his term.

"The morning of his release he bought two automatics with his prison wages. He stationed himself at the busiest corner of the city, his plan being to murder a round dozen at least before going down himself. He stood there for a long time, gloating, turning the terrible idea over in his mind like a child reflecting on Christmas morning.

"How sweet was revenge!

"He had wrapped a handkerchief round his right hand, so that when he drew one murder machine from his overcoat pocket it was invisible. He pointed that concealed gun at person after person. He couldn't just decide on whom to begin his butchery.

"He pointed it at an old lady—and something rose up in his throat and half strangled him.

"He put his hand back in his pocket, walked to a river, and threw his guns into it. The old lady's face had brought to his crazy brain a vision of his long departed mother.

"He wanted to lead a righteous life. Too late! Every now and then the desire to slay, to see vigorous life crumple like an empty sack, to hear some one shriek for mercy as he shrieked in the black dungeon, would come stealing over him just as the craving for dope grips a poor devil of a hop fiend. Larry lived a dog's existence.

"At last he fled from civilization, up here to the lonesome north, where there's only human rubbish to kill, and not much of that.

"He told me all about it—over there at Lac la Biche.

"He dreaded a relapse worse than you dread a knife in your back while you're asleep to-night. He knew that if any one ever done him dirt—made him real angry—he'd not be able to hold in. I remember him sneering at our ideas of law and order.

"We'd jail a poor redskin for stealing a pocketful of beans, while he, a shrapnel shell of lust and murder liable to burst at any moment, went here and there as he pleased. He laughed at our bungling civilization—and he was dead right.

"What? Don't you think if he hadn't been jailed for making a kiddish mistake—picking up the purse—he might have grown up a decent citizen?"

"It's a rotten shame," agreed Constable Caldwell. "I guess lots of criminals get started just like that. I don't think a youngster who has done some small misdeed should be flung into jail with hardened old crooks right straight off the bat."

"Ah! I'm glad you've said that," breathed the hardened man-hunter, an odd catch in his voice.

"But that don't alter the fact that Larry has killed a man and we've got to bring him in, dead or alive."

"Dead or alive it is."

"He'd shoot both of us rather than submit to capture?" surmised Caldwell.

"Would he?" The sergeant's laugh was as mirthless as blasphemy. "He'd shoot us down like rabbits. He's got to—don't you see? He's killed a man. The law means to kill him. To save his life he'll kill a whole regiment. He's in the crime rut.

"He slipped into it years ago when he picked up a purse, and he's never been able to climb out. Once you're in the crime rut, lad, it's the hardest job in all the world to climb out."

The sergeant drew a book from his pocket. At the same instant a beam of moonlight coming thru a tiny slit of a window lighted up dimly the interior of the cabin; and Caldwell saw that the book was a little, dark-edged Bible.

"Let's pray for poor old Larry," McMahon said. "Then, after we've had a few winks, we'll go out and shoot him, or drag him in to let the law hang him."

For a quarter of an hour Sergeant McMahon read from the Bible, Caldwell joining in as best he could. Then the odd pair sought repose.

The mournful night noises blended into a dirge, and Constable Caldwell dozed off. He awoke with a start. A vision of jail-crazed Larry, creeping about like a weasel and slitting throats in the darkness because he had to or die on the gallows, had impinged on his dreams.

He tiptoed to the window and gazed out into the sighing night. Thinking of Larry skulking out there in the woods, a prison-crazed replica of a man to be hunted down and killed like a mad dog, Caldwell shuddered. And that same Larry had been a good kid, had tried to live honestly.

Yes, civilization still contained flaws—terrible flaws. Noiselessly the young officer practiced whipping his automatic from his sheath. He wondered if, when they met, his bullet would find its mark quicker than Larry's.

AT DAYBREAK Sergeant McMahon awoke from a sound sleep and issued his orders.

"You take that trail thru to Lac la Biche," he instructed, "and I'll follow the other one that leads to Baptiste Lake and on to the new railroad. Tell the major not to worry if I don't show up for a month. If Larry has taken this trail I'll get him, no matter how long it takes."

The law-hounds adjusted their packs and commenced their long hikes, one going east and the other west.

After two hours of solitary travel, Constable Caldwell missed his compass and retraced his steps, pondering as he walked the odd character of Sergeant McMahon. Why, at one point in his narrative the wolf-visaged sergeant had appeared to be on the verge of womanly tears. And the praying—that was odd.

He was a strange officer, surely. It was curious that his uniform fitted him no better, that it had that little hole in the right breast.

And then, off the trail, some fifty yards from the old house, the young officer stumbled on a full and complete explanation. He stumbled on a dead body, a body that he was able presently to identify as that of the real Sergeant McMahon.

It had been stripped of its uniform, and had lain there, stark and cold, for eighteen hours at least.

* * *

Builders of Our Nation.

OF THE first seven Presidents of the United States, four were from Virginia, two from Massachusetts, and one from Tennessee. Three of the seven died on July 4, and two on the same day and year. Two of them were on the committee of three that drafted the Declaration of Independence, which two died on the same day and year, on the anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Of the first five only one had a son, and that son became a President. The initial letter of the surnames of two out of the seven is the same, the initial of two others the same and the initial of the remaining two the same. The one whose initials stand alone is he who stands alone in greatness and the unalloyed admiration of the world, George Washington.

Do you know who the other men were?

John Adams,
Thomas Jefferson,
James Madison,
James Monroe,
John Quincy Adams
Andrew Jackson.

Jefferson and Adams died on the same day of the same year: July 4, 1826. Monroe died July 4, 1831.

* * *

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Grandma Sits in the Game

(Continued From Page 13)

peremptorily, holding out her hand for the bottle.

"I'm afraid you're running up her temperature, officer. You won't find any more bottles."

"Looks queer to me," grudgingly admitted the officer, "luggage enough to go to Spain and the old lady don't seem very sick to me. I'll just take your number."

Grandma chuckled as they left the officer behind. "He would have run up my temperature if he had kept my tonic What time is it?"

"Nearly 2. I told Dr. Knowlton we would try to be there by 2."

"Can we make it?" Ruth asked.

"Nope, not at this rate, but I guess we can speed 'er up now."

As the lights of the next town showed in the distance, Grandma sighed in relief. "Well, we've eloped so far at least, where do you suppose James is by now, Ruth?"

Ruth did not need to answer as that moment a big car slid in ahead of them where the two roads joined.

"Heavens, that's father's car!"

The brakes ground as Roger slowed down so close behind the big car that they could distinctly hear the man's voice as he leaned out to call to a policeman who was standing in front of a store "Isn't there a new road from here to Riverside, shorter than the main one?" Ruth clung to Roger's arm and they all held their breath to hear the answer.

"Yep," answered the officer. "Shorter, but not so good a road. Turn to your left at the next corner, go five blocks east, then straight."

"Thanks," and the big car shot ahead.

"Oh, Roger, dear," urged Ruth.

"Feed her gas, Roger," cried the old lady, with wild excitement. "We've got the main road. Now, Ruthie, don't you cry. We'll beat him yet."

"That's the talk," exulted Roger, stimulated anew by the opposition, and bound now to win out

"We never can," mourned Ruth. "dad's car's a racer."

"There's some speed in this one," and Roger, his face set and determined, leaned forward over the wheel in the concentrated way he had when dominated by one idea. "He'll eat our dust yet."

But as they flew over a bridge, another motorcycle policeman over took them. "Hey!" he shouted.

"More bootleggers," groaned Roger, "this cooks our goose."

"Eloping?" the officer called genially as he dismounted.

"Quick," hissed Grandma. "Under the robe, Ruthie."

As Ruth slipped down to the floor of the car her grandmother pulled the rug up snugly about her

"Looking for two elopers on way to Riverside. Are you it—them—those?" the officer asked, facetiously

"We are not," coldly answered the old lady. "My grandson here is hurrying me to a doctor's in Riverside. Will you kindly let us proceed?"

"Pardon, ma'am," the officer stepped back, and as their car started Grandma leaned out and called back, "We just saw a car turn onto the new road back there. Maybe that's the one!"

Ruth crawled back to her seat, almost stifled with laughter at the man's polite "Thank you." 'Grandma, what would we do without you. Taking you to a doctor's in Riverside! That was rich."

"Well, we are going to Dr. Knowlton's, aren't we? I didn't feel it incumbent upon me to state that he is a Doctor of Divinity. And that policeman never even got my hair tonic," she added complacently.

Roger threw back his head and shouted, "You're a life-saver, Grandma. But they surely are after us. Let's hurry."

THEY had barely settled down to a steady speed when, rounding a curve, they were thrown almost out of their seats, as Roger threw in the emergency brake. A car was half across the road, the two rear wheels over a steep embankment.

"The devil! Hurt, Ruth?"

"No-o." Her teeth were chattering. "What is it now?"

"Pull me out?" shouted a voice from the rear of the big car. "Skidded off the road around that corner."

"That you, Stillman?"

"Yeh, who are you? Oh, hello, Rodge. Might as well pull around me and go on. You can't pull me out. Not enough power."

"Can't eh?" Roger's lips shut into a thin line. His nerves were ragged. He had heard that phrase, "not enough power" once too often. "Look here, Stillman. You said you wouldn't buy a Newark because it hadn't the power of your Kaber. I'll pull your Kaber out with my Newark, and show you that it has. You'll buy a Newark tomorrow. A go?"

"I will not."

"All right." Roger started his car.

"Hey, wait! Think you can get me out of this?"

"Know I can. Good night."

"Wait!" The tone was agonized. "Try it, will you?"

"Sign here." Roger was out of his car and thrust a paper in the other's face.

"No, you get me out first."

"All right. Got a towline?"

They fastened the line and Roger climbed back into his car.

"Suppose you can do it?" Grandma whispered.

"Pull his tub out? Well, rather."

The car started, snorted, stopped, started again and then with a series of stacatto jerks slowly pulled the big car up in the road. Roger ran back.

"Sign here. We're in a deuce of a hurry."

"You certainly have power. Admit it and thanks, but what's the rush about the order?"

"Tell you some other time," Roger's voice called back as he leaped into his car.

"Oh, dear," Ruth was all but crying. "We'll never get there now."

"Yes, we will. We didn't lose five minutes. "Who's the dame he had with him?"

"I didn't see any one. But he has been taking Ethel Haverly to dances a lot. Her father doesn't like him."

"Shouldn't think he would. Fellow who hasn't sense enough to know a good car when he sees one."

The car swerved and rocked as mile after mile unfolded behind them, but the speedometer needle scarcely moved, so steadily did Roger hold the pace.

"There's Riverside." Grandma drew a long breath. The suspense, while thrilling, was telling on her. "Now to Dr. Knowlton's"

Quickly the car simmered down to a reasonable speed, and they all unconsciously relaxed as they turned off the main street to the darkened residence district.

"Now, just where does he live?"

"Two streets ahead and to the right half a block," Ruth spoke slowly. "Oh, Roger, I'm afraid."

"Afraid of what, Ruth? Not of marrying me?" His tone was very gentle.

"No-o, not exactly, but——"

"Now, Ruthie," her grandmother spoke authoritatively, "you are just plain nervous. There's Dr. Knowlton's house, all lighted up and if you don't marry Roger, I shall. I'm not going to elope for nothing, I can tell you, not after all our troubles."

"That's right, you little old dear. We'll show her who's eloping, won't we?"

But Roger's look was tender as he lifted Ruth from the car. She clung to him her courage oozing now that they had arrived safely.

It was the little old lady who hurried up the steps and briskly rang the bell and it was she who met the minister and introduced the two men.

As the old minister greeted Ruth, he said with a laugh, "It seems to be a busy morning for so early. I've just married one couple, and am expecting another, Glenn Stillman and Miss Haverly."

"Stillman!"

"Ethel Haverly!" Ruth clutched at Roger. "Did you ever?"

"Never," agreed Roger. "That's who that cop was after, too. He wasn't after us. Her father has been afraid they would elope. Hope they make it."

"So do I," agreed the minister, twinkling at them behind his thick glasses, "nothing pleases me as much as an elopement. It isn't quite the thing, I know, but when—" he coughed slightly —'extenuating circumstances justify it, I confess I enjoy the fun as well as any one."

As they stepped into the reception hall, from behind the velvet curtains a man's voice was heard. "This way, Mazie Now we're off."

"Father here!" Ruth turned wide eyes of horror to her grandmother.

"And Moms!" Roger looked dazed. "Let's duck in here."

But before they could move the velvet curtains parted and in the frame of the doorway stood Ruth's father, with Roger's mother standing behind him.

"Dad!"

"Moms!"

"My dears!" Roger's mother faltered, then added quickly, "you didn't quite make it, did you? We've been married five minutes."

"Married!"

"You two!"

"Certainly," Ruth's father spoke with perfect composure. "If you think that Roger's little coupe can out-distance my car when I've once started——"

"Little coupe! We made sixty miles most of the way, sir." Roger's voice was angry. "You nearly had us once with that motorcycle cop you set on us."

"What do you mean—set a motorcop on you?"

"Didn't you send a message to have us stopped as we were eloping?"

"I did not. That officer held us up too. We thought you had put him on."

Roger blotted a damp forehead with a fast-wilting handkerchief. "It seems to be elopers' night. There's evidently one couple at large that will arrive any minute, you're another, and we're the third."

"You!" roared Mr. Cunningham. "Are you eloping?"

"What did you think we were doing? Out for a swim?"

"When I heard that crash upstairs," said Mr. Cunningham, "I thought Ruth had found out and that she and you were on our trail."

"And we've been beating it all the way thinking the crash woke you and that you were after us," Roger explained, adding: "We saw your machine leave the garage and were right behind you when you asked the police about the new road to Riverside."

Ruth's father grinned reluctantly. "I lit out when the noise upstairs broke loose. Left on all the lights, too. Don't know what Lucretia will say."

Roger's mother sank back weakly on a divan and laughed till the tears coursed down her cheeks.

"You said I could marry Ruth when I could stick to one thing—put it over. Well, I've put over this elopement, so far, and I sold Stillman that car. Here's his signature."

"When did you do that?"

"Tonight, on the way down. Combined business and pleasure. As a bachelor I may be low-geared, but with Ruth as a wife and Grandma as my most precious in-law, I guess I'll have to throw 'er in high."

"And where do you come in, Mrs. Cunningham?" inquired the minister, turning to the little old lady, "have you some one concealed out in the car that you are eloping with?"

Grandma surveyed him mildly. "No, sir, I haven't. I wish I had. But if I had stayed at home two minutes longer I could have eloped with James and Mazie, and if I had stayed at home altogether I'd have been living alone, as carefree as anything. But instead, I nearly broke my blessed neck crawling down a ladder and risked it midst bootlegger hunters, policemen and reckless driving. But I wouldn't have missed eloping"—her eyes twinkled reminiscently as she carefully sat down on a stiff gilt chair. "I wouldn't have missed eloping, sir, for a trunk full of white dresses and three open cars upholstered in pink. No, sir, not if each car was trimmed with orange stripes!"

* * *

Wife—I spent the afternoon shopping.
Hub—Not much else, I hope.

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"I had eczema for many years on my head and could not get anything to stop the agony. I saw your ad and got one box of Peterson's Ointment and I owe you many thanks for the good it has done me. There isn't a blotch on my head now and I couldn't help but thank Peterson, for the cure is great." Miss Mary Hill, 420 Third avenue, Pittsburgh, Pa.

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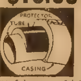

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No letter necessary. Just mail this blank with remittance.

AN ALL DAY'S JOB

HE ASKED the lady at the door if she wanted the grass cut. If so, he would do it for $4, being as he was out of work.

"Why, last week a man cut my grass in an hour and only charged me 50 cents."

"You see, madam, I can easily kill time and make an all-day job of it. The other man was a greenhorn, but I am a professional."

He did not get the job.

◆

A Bit Skeptical.

"Who is the important looking stranger?"

"He styles himself the advance guard of prosperity. He is here to address the business men of our town."

"The hotel proprietor doesn't seem to believe he's the advance guard of prosperity. He has just refused to cash the stranger's check."

◆

Hardened.

"You wrote me," protested the summer boarder, "that mosquitoes never bothered you."

"They don't," said Mr. Cobbles. "I've been living here more than thirty years. In that length of time a man can get used to anything."

◆

Forbidden Fruit.

Mrs. Gramercy—It seems to me your husband gives you everything he can afford.

Mrs. Spendall—That's why I feel so wretched, dear. My heart is just set on the things he can't afford.

◆

ALL HE COULD DO

"HAS the landlord raised your rent?" he asked, as they waited on the corner for a street car.

"Not a dollar," was the reply.

"You're a very lucky man. How does it happen?"

"Why, you see, I own my own house and I can't very well raise the rent of my own house, can I? I am also the landlord of six other houses, and I have raised the rent on them, and helped things along the best I could."

◆

Nerves Beginning Early.

Mary's little brother had broken her doll's house and done other annoying things, until at last she gave way to her exasperation and slapped him. Asked to explain her conduct, Mary said "Well, he's been getting on my nerves all day till my nerves just flew at him."

◆

Conspicuousness.

"Do you intend to wear one of these limited bathing suits now in vogue?"

"Of course," replied Miss Cayenne. "You don't suppose I'd wear a great voluminous bathing suit and have everybody on the beach staring at me!"

◆

Allurements of Sound.

"Whenever you make a speech your constituents start in and cheer by the hour."

"Yes," replied Senator Sorghum, "I begin to suspect they'd rather listen to themselves cheer than hear me talk."

◆

Jack's Fine Discretion.

Jack—Father, one of the boys in my class said I looked like you.

Father—What did you say?

Jack—Nothin'. He's a lot bigger than me.

◆

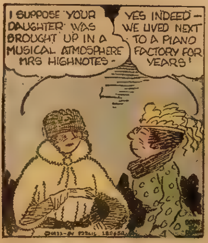
Old Cynic.

Green—They say it's unlucky to postpone the wedding day.

Grumpley—Not if you keep on doing it.

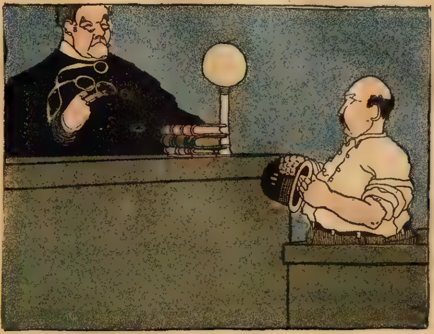
◆

SOLID IVORY


I SUPPOSE YOUR DAUGHTER WAS BROUGHT UP IN A MUSICAL ATMOSPHERE MRS HIGHNOTES -
YES INDEED - WE LIVED NEXT TO A PIANO FACTORY FOR YEARS!

JOKES AND MORE JOKES

GOOD ADVICE



Judge—I discharge you this time, but try to keep in better company hereafter.
The Miscreant—Righto, Judge! You won't see me back here again.

Hard on the Typist.

"How do you like your new governor, Hilda?" asked one typist of another.

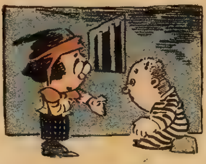
"Oh, not so bad, but he's rather bigoted."

"What do you mean by bigoted?"

"He seems to think that words can only be spelled his way."

◆

Stories That Attracted Most.



Kind Old Lady—You say a love of stories brought you to this prison, my poor man?

Burglar—Yes, mum.

K. O. L.—Promiscuous reading is undoubtedly bad. What stories attracted you the most?

Burglar—Second stories, mum.

◆

It Usually Pleases Us.

"It is easy enough for an orator to get thunderous applause at the very beginning of his address."

"How?"

"All he has to do is to say, 'My friends, we are a great people,' and then pause dramatically for the cheers."

◆

Team Organization.

Labor Agitator (after witnessing his first football match)—That's what I call organized labor, comrade. One blast from the whistle and every man stops immediately

◆

A Real Picket.

"She certainly is clever."

"What now?"

"She's married well three times."

Place Filled.

"Have you an opening here for a young man with three college degrees?" asked the brisk caller.

"No," said the self-made man. "We've had our janitor a long time and we intend to keep him."

◆

MUNDANE RESPONSIBILITY.

A better world beyond its hope extends,
With joyous hearts we listen;
But that should not encourage us, dear friends,
To stop improving this 'un.

◆

In Disgrace.

"What's the matter with Tommy? Been in a fight?"

"Seems he was beaten at marbles by a girl."

◆

An Opening.

"As a doctor I'm a failure. I can get no patients."

"Can't you write wise dope for the magazines?"

◆

SHE WILL WAIT

A COLORED woman entered a police station and asked the sergeant at the desk:

"Do you gin any advice here?"

"Sometimes we do," was the reply.

"Den I want you to gin me some. I has got a husband, but he don't amount to much. He has got it in his head dat he wants to go up in de air wid one of dose flyin' machines. If he goes up am he liable to fall?"

"Yes, he is sure to," replied the sergeant.

"An' will be killed?"

"Yes, certainly he will be killed."

"An' den I will be a widow?"

"Yes."

"An' arter a y'ar some smart cull'd man will want to marry me. Now, den, would you encourage my husband to fly?"

"Yes, I think so."

"All right, den," said the colored lady as she made for the door. "I will go right home an' encourage my husband to go up among de clouds an' den I will sit down and wait fur my next husband."

Some More Psychology.

"Do you think Mrs. Peckton can be elected?"

"Just confidentially," said Mr. Peckton, "I believe she is going to be defeated. In that event I'm prepared to spend a considerable sum of money for clothes, articles of personal adornment and perhaps a trip to the seashore. The reaction is bound to make her take a keener interest in strictly feminine pursuits."

◆

A Quick Thinker.

"Sam," said Mr. Grabcoin to his office boy, "you told me you had an engagement with your dentist yesterday afternoon."

"I—er—did, sir."

"I saw you at the ball game."

"Yes, sir. The tall, thin gentleman sitting right next to me was my dentist."

◆

HE DIDN'T SUICIDE

"SIR," said a colored man who entered a police station, "I came here to tell you dat I was gwine to suicide."

"For what reason?" asked the sergeant at the desk

"Bekase dar was no mo' joys at my house. Am it agin de law to jump into de river?"

"No, not exactly," was the reply. "But if you get out again that is against the law, and you also get very wet, and apt to catch cold over it. You had best find some empty old house and shoot yourself."

"Yes, sir, dat am de way," answered the colored man.

He went out to return in an hour to say:

"You see, I didn't suicide arter all. I found de empty house and also found de landlord dar, and he wanted $75 a month rent an' ten dollars extra fur holdin' an inquest."

◆

Business Before Pleasure.

"I'll give you a note of introduction to my favorite bootlegger."

"Thanks. Will anything else be necessary?"

"You might dangle a $20 bill nonchalantly in your left hand to show him that you haven't dropped in merely to pass the time of day."

◆

Not Everything to Be Desired.

"Congratulate me, Jim. I am engaged to Betty Flyrte."

"I'm awfully sorry, old man, but I can't conscientiously do it. I'm engaged to Betty myself."

◆

Early Prejudices.

Little Ella—I'm never going to Holland when I grow up.

Governess—Why not?

"'Cause our geography says it's a low, lying country."

◆

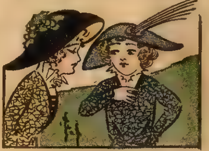
Not Happy.

"What good do all your millions do you?"

"You may well ask that, old friend. I'm a duffer at golf."

◆

Fond of Home Cooking.



"Are you and your husband fond of home cooking?"

"Oh, yes, indeed! We accept every invitation to dinner from friends we can get."

◆

No Inducement.

"Rejected you, did she? Did you tell her you could support her in the style she was accustomed to?"

"Yes, but she said she was looking for something better than that."

◆

DOING WELL.

Oh, come into the garden, Maude,
Our crop will bring us cash.
The corn and beans I lately sowed
Are growing succotash.

◆

Willing to Take All.

Mr. Grouch—I suppose you only married me because I had a little money.

Mrs. Grouch—That's not true. I'd have married you if you had twice as much.

◆

Soon Fixed.

"I don't think I can wear this shoe."

"Yes, you can, madam. Our surgical department on the fourth floor will amputate your little toe for two coupons."

Riders of the Purple Sage

(Concluded From Page 19.)

due. We'll hev plenty of water fer a while. An' we can hold thet herd from anybody except Oldrin'. I come in fer supplies. I'll pack a couple of burros an' drive out after dark tonight."

"Judkins, take what you want from the storeroom. Lassiter will help you. I can't thank you enough . . . but—wait."

Jane went to the room that had once been her father's, and from a secret chamber in the thick stone wall she took a bag of gold, and, carrying it back to the court, she gave it to the rider.

"There, Judkins, and understand that I regard it as little for your loyalty. Give what is fair to your boys and keep the rest. Hide it. Perhaps that would be wisest."

"Oh . . . Miss Withersteen!" ejaculated the rider. "I couldn't earn so much in—in ten years. It's not right—I oughtn't take it."

"Judkins, you know I'm a rich woman. I tell you I've few faithful friends. I've fallen upon evil days. God only knows what will become of me and mine! So take the gold."

She smiled in understanding of his speechless gratitude, and left him with Lassiter. Presently she heard him speaking low at first, then in louder accents emphasized by the thumping of his rifle on the stones. "As infernal a job as even you, Lassiter, ever heerd of."

"Why, son," was Lassiter's reply, "this breakin' of Miss Withersteen may seem bad to you, but it ain't bad—yet. Some of these wall-eyed fellers who look jest as if they was walkin' in the shadow of Christ himself, right down the sunny road, now they can think of things an' do things that are really hell-bent."

Jane covered her ears and ran to her own room, and there like a caged lioness she paced to and fro till the coming of little Fay reversed her dark thoughts.

THE following day, a warm and muggy one threatening rain, while Jane was resting in the court, a horseman clattered thru the grove and up to the hitching-rack. He leaped off and approached Jane with the manner of a man determined to execute a difficult mission, yet fearful of its reception. In the gaunt, wiry figure and lean, brown face Jane recognized one of her Mormon riders, Blake. It was he of whom Judkins had long since spoken. Of all the riders ever in her employ Blake owed her the most, and as he stepped before her, removing his hat and making manly efforts to subdue his emotion, he showed that he remembered.

"Miss Withersteen, mother's dead," he said.

"She died free from pain, at the end, and she's buried—resting at last, thank God! . . . I've come to ride for you again, if you'll have me. Don't think I mentioned mother to get your sympathy. When she was living and your riders quit, I had to also. I was afraid of what might be done—said to her. . . . Miss Withersteen, we can't talk of—of what's going on now——"

"Blake, do you know?"

"I know a great deal. You understand, my lips are shut. But without explanation or excuse I offer my services. I'm a Mormon—I hope a good one. But—there are some things! . . . It's no use, Miss Withersteen, I can't say any more—what I'd like to. But will you take me back—let me ride for you—show everybody what I mean?"

"Blake, it makes me happy to hear you. How my riders hurt me when they quit!" Jane felt the hot tears well to her eyes and splash down upon her hands. "I thought so much of them—tried so hard to be good to them. And not one was true. You've made it easy to forgive. Perhaps many of them really feel as you do, but dare not return to me. Still, Blake, I hesitate to take you back. Yet I want you so much."

"Do it then. If you're going to make your life a lesson to Mormon women, let me make mine a lesson to the men. Right is right. I believe in you, and here's my life to prove it."

"You hint it may mean your life!" said Jane, breathless and low.

"We won't speak of that. I want to come back. I want to do what every rider aches in his secret heart to do for you. . . . Miss Withersteen, I hoped it'd not be necessary to tell you that my mother on her deathbed told me to have courage. She knew how the thing galled me—she told me to come back . . . Will you take me?"

"God bless you, Blake! Yes, I'll take you back. And will you—will you accept gold from me?"

"I just gave Judkins a bag of gold. I'll give you one. If you will not take it you must not come back. You might ride for me a few months—weeks—days till the storm breaks. Then you'd have nothing, and be in disgrace with your people. We'll forearm you against poverty, and me against endless regret. I'll give you gold which you can hide—till some future time."

"Well, if it pleases you," replied Blake. "But you know I never thought of pay. Now, Miss Withersteen, one thing more. I want to see this man Lassiter. Is he here?"

"Yes, but Blake—what— Need you see him? Why?" asked Jane, instantly worried. "I can speak to him—tell him about you."

"That won't do. I want to—I've got to tell him myself. Where is he?"

"Lassiter is with Mrs. Larkin. She is ill. I'll call him," answered Jane, and going to the door she softly called for the rider. A faint, musical jingle preceded his step—then his tall form crossed the threshold.

"Lassiter, here's Blake, an old rider of mine. He has come back to me, and he wishes to speak to you."

Blake's brown face turned exceedingly pale.

"Yes, I had to speak to you," he said swiftly. "My name's Blake. I'm a Mormon rider. Lately I quit Miss Withersteen. I've come to beg her to take me back. Now I don't know you, but I know—what you are. So I've this to say to your face. It would never occur to this woman to imagine—let alone suspect me to be a spy. She couldn't think it might just be a low plot to come here and shoot you in the back. Jane Withersteen hasn't that kind of mind. . . . Well, I've not come for that. I want to help her—to pull a bridle along with Judkins and—and you. The thing is—do you believe me?"

"I reckon I do," replied Lassiter. How this slow, cool speech contrasted with Blake's hot, impulsive words! "You might have saved some of your breath. See here, Blake, cinch this in your mind. Lassiter has met some square Mormons! An' mebbe——"

"Blake," interrupted Jane, nervously anxious to terminate a colloquy that she perceived was an ordeal for him. "Go at once and fetch me a report of my horses."

"Miss Withersteen! . . . You mean the big drove—down in the sage-cleared fields?"

"Of course," replied Jane. "My horses are all there, except the blooded stock I keep here."

"Haven't you heard—then?"

"Heard? No! What's happened to them?"

"They're gone, Miss Withersteen, gone these ten days past. Dorn told me, and I rode down to see for myself."

"Lassiter—did you know?" asked Jane, whirling to him.

"I reckon so. . . . But what was the use to tell you?"

It was Lassiter turning away his face and Blake studying the stone flags at his feet that brought Jane to the understanding of what she betrayed. She strove desperately, but she could not rise immediately from such a blow.

"My horses! My horses! What's become of them?"

"Dorn said the riders report another drive by Oldring. . . . And I trailed the horses miles down the slope toward Deception Pass."

"My red herd's gone! My horses gone! The white herd will go next. I can't stand that. But, if I lost Black Star and Night, it would be like parting with my own flesh and blood. Lassiter—Blake—am I in danger of losing my racers?"

"A rustler—or—or anybody stealin' hosses of yours would most of all want blacks," said Lassiter. His evasive reply was affirmative enough. The other rider nodded gloomy acquiescence.

"Oh! Oh!" Jane Withersteen choked, with violent utterance.

"Let me take charge of the blacks?" asked Blake. "One more rider won't be any great help to Judkins. But I might hold Black Star and Night, if you put such store on their value."

"Value! Blake, I love my racers. Besides, there's another reason why I mustn't lose them. You go to the stables. Go with Jerd every day when he runs the horses, and don't let them out of your sight. If you would please me—win my gratitude, guard my black racers."

WHEN Blake had mounted and ridden out of the court Lassiter regarded Jane with the smile that was becoming rarer as the days sped by.

"'Pears to me, as Blake says, you do put some store on them hosses. Now, I ain't gainsayin' that the Arabians are the handsomest hosses I ever seen. But Bells can beat Night, an' run neck an' neck with Black Star."

"Lassiter, don't tease me now, I'm miserable—sick. Bells is fast, but he can't stay with the blacks, and you know it. Only Wrangle can do that."

"I'll bet that big raw-boned brute can more'n show his heels to your black racers. Jane, out there in the sage, on a long chase, Wrangle could kill your favorites."

"No, no," replied Jane, impatiently. "Lassiter, why do you say that so often? I know you've teased me at times, and I believe it's only kindness. You're always trying to keep my mind off worry. But you mean more by this repeated mention of my racers?"

"I reckon so." Lassiter paused, and for the thousandth time in her presence moved his black sombrero round and round, as if counting the silver pieces on the band. "Well, Jane, I've sort of read a little that's passin' in your mind."

"You think I might fly from my home—from Cottonwoods—from the Utah border?"

"I reckon. An' if you ever do an' get away with the blacks I wouldn't like to see Wrangle left here on the sage. Wrangle could catch you. I know Venters had him. But you can never tell. Mebbe he hasn't got him now. . . . Besides—things are happenin', an' somethin' of the same queer nature might have happened to Venters."

"God knows you're right! . . . Poor Bern, how long he's gone! In my trouble I've been forgetting him. But, Lassiter, I've little fear for him. I've heard my riders say he's as keen as a wolf. . . . As to your reading my thoughts—well, your suggestion makes an actual thought of what was only one of my dreams. I believe I dreamed of flying from this wild borderland, Lassiter. I've strange dreams. I'm not always practical, and thinking of my many duties, as you said once. For instance—if I dared—if I dared I'd ask you to saddle the blacks and ride away with me—and hide me."

"Jane!"

The rider's sunburned face turned white. A few times Jane had seen Lassiter's cool calm broken—when he had met little Fay, when he had learned how and why he had come to love both child and mistress, when he had stood beside Milly Erne's grave. But one and all they could not be considered in the light of his present agitation. Not only did Lassiter turn white—not only did he grow tense, not only did he lose his coolness, but also he suddenly, violently, hungrily took her into his arms and crushed her to his breast.

"Lassiter!" cried Jane, trembling. It was an action for which she took sole blame. Instantly, as if dazed, weakened, he released her. "Forgive me!" went on Jane. "I'm always forgetting your—your feelings. I thought of you as my faithful friend. I'm always making you out more than human . . . only, let me say,—I meant that—about riding away. I'm wretched, sick of this —this—oh, something bitter and black grows on my heart!"

"Jane, the hell—of it," he replied, with deep intake of breath, "is you can't ride away. Mebbe realizin' it accounts for my grabbin' you—that way, as much as the crazy boy's rapture your words gave me. I don't understand myself . . . But the hell of this game is—you can't ride away."

"Lassiter! . . . What on earth do you mean? I'm an absolutely free woman."

"You ain't absolutely anythin' of the kind. . . . I reckon I've got to tell you!"

"Tell me all. It's uncertainty that makes me a coward. It's faith and hope —blind love, if you will, that makes me miserable. Every day I awake believing—still believing. The day grows, and with it doubts, fears, and that black hate that bites hotter and hotter into my heart. Then comes night—I pray—I pray for all, and for myself—I sleep—and I awake free once more, trustful, faithful, to believe—to hope! Then, oh, my God! I grow and live a thousand years till night again! . . . But, if you want to see me a woman, tell me why I can't ride away—tell me what more I'm to lose—tell me the worst."

"Jane, you're watched. There's no single move of yours, except when you're hid in your house, that ain't seen by sharp eyes. The cottonwood grove's full

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of creepin', crawlin' men. Like Indians in the grass! When you rode, which wasn't often lately, the sage was full of sneakin' men. At night they crawl under your windows, into the court, an' I reckon into the house. Jane Withersteen, you know, never locked a door! This here grove's a hummin' bee-hive of mysterious happenings.

"Jane, it ain't so much that these spies keep out of my way as me keepin' out of theirs. They're goin' to try to kill me. That's plain. But mebbe I'm as hard to shoot in the back as in the face. So far I've seen fit to watch only. This all means, Jane, that you're a marked woman. You can't get away—not now. Mebbe later, when you're broken, you might. But that's sure doubtful.

"Jane, you're to lose the cattle that's left—your home an' ranch—an' Amber Spring. You can't even hide a sack of gold! For it couldn't be slipped out of the house, day or night, an' hid or buried, let alone be rid off with. You may lose all. I'm tellin' you, Jane, hopin' to prepare you, if the worst does come. I told you once before about that strange power I've got to feel things."

"Lassiter, what can I do?"

"Nothin', I reckon, except know what's comin' an' wait an' be game. If you'd let me make a call on Tull, an' a long deferred call on——"

"Hush! . . . Hush!" she whispered.

"Well, even that wouldn't help you any in the end."

"What does it mean? Oh, what does it mean? I am my father's daughter—a Mormon, yet I can't see! I've not failed in religion—in duty. For years I've given with a free and full heart. When my father died I was rich. If I'm still rich it's because I couldn't find enough ways to become poor. What am I, what are my possessions to set in motion such intensity of secret oppression?"

"Jane, the mind behind it all is an empire builder."

"But Lassiter, I would give freely—all I own to avert this—this wretched thing. If I give—that would leave me with faith still. Surely my—my churchmen think of my soul? If I lose my trust in them——"

"Child, be still!" said Lassiter, with a dark dignity that had in it something of pity. "You are a woman, fine an' big an' strong, an' your heart matches your size. But in mind you're a child. I'll say a little more—then I'm done. I'll never mention this again. Among many thousands of women you're one who has bucked against your churchmen. They tried you out, an' failed of persuasion, an' finally of threats. You meet now the cold steel of a will as far from Christlike as the universe is wide. You're to be broken. Your body is to be held, given to some man, made, if possible, to bring children into the world. But your soul? . . . What do they care for your soul?"

Now that we are getting well into the story, it is very likely that Ledger readers will await each new installment with considerable impatience. What they are to get, however, will well repay them for again taking up the interesting tale, as the Ledger is presenting it in large portions, believing that it is worthy of every inch of space that it occupies. Part seven will appear next week, with more about Venters and the girl, Bess.

The Bandit in Black

(Continued From Page 11)

apartment house in which the sisters lived. The story from then on is not a pretty one. The actress sister came home one night to find the younger girl gone. There was a pitiful note. A few days later the girl's body was found in the lake. Sometime between those two events Carl Roth disappeared."

The two girls watched Stannard with a tense interest. Wheeler almost gasped.

"Now, I've had our Chicago people on the wire. Already I've learned that the older sister has not been seen in Chicago for nearly a year. They're working now to get me a good description of her."

"And you think it will turn out that our mysterious woman bandit is this Tilden girl?" asked Wheeler.

"I'm very sure of it," replied Stannard, his eyes upon the two girls. Then his voice became very hard.

"Miss Brockton did you write Carl Roth a note asking him to meet you here on the night of the murder?"

"Me? Write a note? Certainly not—I was thru with him. I had told him——"

"You had quarreled with him?"

"Possibly you'd call it that." She shrugged her shoulders and lifted her dark brows. "I told him that I had found out he was carrying on an affair with his stenographer. I insisted that he send her away before I would give him the answer that he desired." She sniffed scornfully. "I have reason to believe now that he had no idea of marriage."

"Do you recognize this?" Stannard passed her the circular letter from the oil company.

"I seem to remember seeing it." She turned the paper over curiously, noted the words on the back and read them. "Why, who wrote this?"

"I did," replied Stannard, a queer crease appearing between his eyes. "I wrote it on your typewriter."

Miss Brockton was plainly concerned, yet Wheeler was quite sure that the contents of that note was a surprise to her. Stannard produced the scrap from the bottom of the page upon which the real note was written.

"I shall have to say, Miss Brockton, that this smaller piece of paper was found in Carl Roth's desk after his death. It was cut from the bottom of this circular letter which bears your name and which I found upon your desk, and the message was written on your typewriter."

SUDDENLY Wheeler found himself watching Ethel. She was leaning forward in her chair, her hands clinched in her lap, her colorless lips compressed, her eyes boring into Miss Brockton. And when Gladys had calmly stated that she had not written the note, and had denied all knowledge of it, Ethel's tense scrutiny did not relax.

All at once Gladys Brockton's troubled countenance cleared. She tossed the two pieces of paper upon the desk, and brushed her gloved hands together. Her eyes swung to Ethel's tense face, held there for an instant, and dropped.

"So that's how it was," she murmured. "Well, he had it coming."

"If you didn't write this note on your machine," demanded Stannard, "who did?"

"I may have a suspicion as to who wrote the note on my typewriter—I saw her—some one—making a getaway thru the rear gate. Let's see—yes, that was the morning of the day I had dinner with Ethel—and that night he—Mr. Roth——"

"Well, who was it?" persisted Stannard.

"You can search me!" she returned flippantly.

"I did search your bungalow," returned Stannard coolly.

She jerked erect at that and her wide eyes flashed.

"You didn't dare!" Then she relaxed with another flirt of her head. "Well, you found nothing."

"I did find something!"

Stannard flipped a coin upon the desk in front of the two girls. Gladys picked it up and turned it in her fingers.

"I can't see what an old foreign coin has to do with it."

Wheeler could not keep his eyes from Ethel's strangely brilliant eyes. Something chill and depressing cut into him. Why this tense interest on Ethel's part? He took the coin from Miss Brockton's hand.

"It is the Chinese coin that I put in my pocket trying to catch the bandit," he explained, his voice husky. "It looks so much like a dime that I hoped she would try to pass it."

Stannard seemed in no hurry to go on. Wheeler, glancing from Ethel to Gladys, felt a tenseness in the situation that was near to breaking.

Then Ethel laughed, a short, mirthless laugh, and settled back into her chair.

"Is this what is known as a third degree?" she asked, smiling with a girlish banter into Stannard's troubled eyes.

"No need of that," he countered, and the hard rasp to his voice made Wheeler flush angrily. "I must confess that I need the description of this Tilden girl in order to connect that motive with the crime. But I have found the mysterious woman in black."

Miss Brockton shrugged her shoulders. Ethel gave a merry laugh.

"Why, you're a regular Sherlock Holmes. How did you find out?"

"This coin," replied Stannard, "and the fact that the bandit costume was mailed from Los Angeles by parcel post on the day after the murder—to a Chicago address."

"How interesting," murmured Ethel, and Wheeler began to breathe again. For some reason she seemed relieved, as if something was occurring to remove the strange fear that had been in her eyes.

Miss Brockton appeared so deeply interested that she could not speak. She leaned forward, her eyes steady upon Stannard's face. But Wheeler could see that her gloved hands were clinched in her lap.

"So I make the assertion that she planned to kill Roth," went on Stannard. "And she planned well. She was determined to kill him, but she had no intention of being caught. She conceived the scheme of masquerading as a bandit, with the purpose of throwing the authorities off the scent. They would think, as they did, that he was killed while resisting an attempt of the woman to rob him. Then, of course, the mystery woman bandit would drop out of sight and the episode would be closed."

"A very clever plan," said Miss Brockton slowly. "So she—she was right here—all the time."

"She was—and is." Stannard rose and stood across the desk from the two girls. "A clever actress, able to take her change almost in seconds and a wonder with make-up, she has fooled her most intimate friends. I know she never planned to profit from her robberies—I think we will find that all her loot was dropped in contribution plates or given to the poor. But she made one slip—a peculiar one, too. She kept that Chinese coin out when he left the rest of the change she took from Wheeler in the Salvation Army donation box."

"And you found that coin in my bungalow?" Miss Brockton's tone was quizzical, and her eyes showed anything but fear.

"I didn't say so." Stannard's voice became like steel, as he leaned across

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the desk and his eyes bored into the startled girl. "But it is still possible that you killed Carl Roth!"

Miss Brockton stared, then she moved uneasily and her eyes darted furtively toward Ethel.

Ethel looked at her for a moment, a strange smile playing around her lips, then she rose slowly and faced the detective across the table.

"You win, Mr. Stannard," said Ethel Clark evenly. "I'm Mabel Tilden!"

CHAPTER XI.

THE MISSING BULLET.

FOR a moment Wheeler stared at the girl standing at bay like a cornered animal. Then with a protesting cry he sprang to her side and slipped his arm around her shoulders.

"Don't do that!" he pleaded. "You need not take another's burden." He raised his troubled eyes to the staring Gladys. "Don't let her do it, Miss Brockton. It isn't fair!"

Ethel moved closer to Wheeler. Her little hand pressed his arm and her smiling eyes rose bravely to his face.

"It is true," she said softly. "I am Mabel Tilden—I—I was the woman bandit." Her eyes, strangely shining, held steadily upon Wheeler's startled countenance. I held you up—and you never knew it."

"Why, it's impossible!" Wheeler whirled to the Sphinxlike Stannard. "That woman was tall—a head taller than Ethel. And she was thin—and her voice—why, its absurd!"

"But it was I, dear." She laid her gloved hand upon Wheeler's arm, and her voice changed to low-pitched familiar tones that made the young man stare. "I was an actress—I knew all about makeup. I planned to deceive people who saw me. My bandit costume was long and close-fitting. Besides that I wore high heeled shoes and a narrow hat with a high crown. And ordinarily"—she dropped her eyes to her short skirt—"dressed to make myself appear short—and girlish."

"Yes," Stannard swung to Wheeler, "Just think back to the time when you were waylaid. The bandit walked beside you—how did her height compare with your own?"

Wheeler glared at the detective, recalling that when the strange woman was walking beside him even the top of her hat was below the level of his shoulder.

Miss Brockton walked around the desk and caught Ethel's hand in both her own.

"I never half appreciated you," she murmured. "It—it will be all right."

Ethel's quick questioning glance brought a long level gaze from Miss Brockton.

"You didn't write that note on my typewriter—I know that—and if you didn't—oh, I know you didn't kill him!"

Ethel made no reply to that, just turned with her head in the air until her eyes met those of Stannard. The detective was the first to relax. With a nod of decision he walked to the bookshelf beside the door, selected a very thick book and laid it upon the desk.

"The bullet!" exclaimed Wheeler, staring at the jagged hole in the cover. "In the City Directory!"

"Yes," said Stannard quietly, opening the torn leaves. "Because this directory is nearly six inches thick, it had been given a place at the end—to keep the other books from falling over. The bullet knocked it down. When it was replaced it was laid on its side without the hole being noticed."

"That's right!" exclaimed Wheeler. "I picked it up myself."

Stannard picked the slug-like bullet out of its resting place and produced the little automatic that had been found in the park.

"You will see," he explained, "that while the lead nose of this bullet has been mashed into a mushroom shape, the steel jacket is intact at the base." With a quick movement he placed the small end of the bullet upon the muzzle of the gun. It was very plain that he could not force the bullet into the hole.

"So it was not this gun that killed Roth!" he stated positively.

Suddenly Ethel relaxed and leaned against Wheeler. Her eyes were bright with tears.

"No," she murmured, "I didn't kill him—but I meant to. She—she was all I had—and he——" She broke off with a determined shake of the head. "I had been planning just as Mr. Stannard said—to get people to think that the bandit woman tried to rob him—and—but that day I was getting desperate—there was too much effort to catch the bandit. I felt that I must get it over that night. I met you in the park, Bruce, on purpose to start a search after the bandit, while I lured Roth to his office by a telephone message. After I escaped from you, Bruce, I ran into the bungalow and waited. I had been there only a moment when you called on the phone."

Miss Brockton whispered hurriedly in the girl's ear, but Ethel shook her head.

"No, it's all right now. I—I was afraid you had killed him—that's why I—I went thru with it. Well, while I was trying to get Roth on the telephone at the hotel, I saw the light go on in his office—and I went over. No one saw me slip in and upstairs. The door to the main office was unlocked and I went in that way. Just as I started toward the private office I heard a woman's voice—and a shot. Then I heard a door close—and footsteps in the hall—running. I opened the door from the outer office—Roth was on the floor—the light was still on—there was blood——" She shivered, biting her lip. "I—I thought you had killed him, Gladys."

Wheeler drew the girl closer and stared at Stannard.

"So I went on with my original plan. I left the fur to throw suspicion on the bandit woman. Then I turned his pockets out to indicate robbery, switched off the light and waited until I heard the janitor passing—I wanted him to see me." She drooped wearily and looked at Stannard with a wan smile. "And after that I let you trick me into dropping the pistol in the park." She turned again to Wheeler with a tender pleading. "I was going to tell you, Bruce, before——"

"Then you packed the bandit costume in a suit box," put in Stannard, with the black wig and all your make-up, and sent it by Mrs. Fallon to mail by parcel post. But you kept the gun out of the package—why?"

"Just overlooked it—as I did that Chinese coin that you found in my bungalow."

Stannard smiled, a rare, tender smile that caused Wheeler's harsh anger to cool. Then the detective pushed the Chinese coin across to Ethel.

"It's all right to say you overlooked it," he said quietly, "but I know better. You intended to keep it—forever."

Ethel smiled up at Wheeler and cuddled closer. Then she frowned at Stannard.

"But if Gladys didn't——" She broke off.

"I didn't think for a moment that Miss Brockton did it," he said. "I knew some one else had deliberately entered her den and wrote that note on her machine. I suspected——"

STANNARD was interrupted by a rapping outside. At a nod from the detective Wheeler opened the door. Fred Roth, his face pale and a troubled frown upon his brow, stood in the hall. Behind Roth stood Clara Jensen.

"I'm looking for Mr. Stannard," said Roth.

"Come in," called the detective.

The two stepped into the room. Clara Jensen hesitated when she saw the two girls, then she threw up her head, pressed her white lips tightly together and walked up to Stannard's side.

Fred Roth glanced doubtfully at the various members of the party and turned to the detective.

"I—I wanted to see you—alone," he muttered. "I have sent for my lawyer. Until he comes——"

But Clara Jensen shook off Roth's restraining hand and crossed to Miss Brockton's side of the desk.

'I'm sorry," she mumbled, biting her lip. "I—I thought you were stealing him. Yes"—she jerked her head erect and swept a quick glance at the others—I killed Carl Roth!"

Wheeler breathed a deep sigh of relief. Ethel and Miss Brockton exclaimed sharply. Both made an impatient movement of interruption which was halted by the quiet voice of the detective.

"Better let her clear it up," said Stannard. "I insist that she confess on account of these other people. However, you may tell her attorney that I shall be glad to testify as a defense witness."

"Yes," mumbled Clara, quickly, her voice harsh with emotion, 'I killed him! He was a beast!' When I learned that he was planning to toss me aside—I decided to—to kill him. I thought Miss Brockton had stolen him—from me—so I wrote that note on her typewriter. Then I went to his office that night and waited. Mr. Wheeler nearly caught me—I dodged into the hall—and the janitor got a glimpse of me. Well—Carl came in—he was very angry—he swore he was thru with all women, I—shot him!"

Stannard nodded with understanding.

"That's about as I had reconstructed it," he explained to the others. "You see, I suspected Miss Jensen from the first for the reason that I discovered that she did not have to go thru her brother's sleeping porch to leave her room. Behind the clothes in her closet there is a door opening into the closet of the next room."

"I shall take care of Miss Jensen's defense," said Roth. "My attorney will call on each hold-up victim and induce him to withdraw his charges by explaining the true state of affairs. I am more than sure we can secure a complete clearance for her in this way. We——"

But Wheeler heard no more. He was leading Ethel into the outer office. At the door she looked up at him, her eyes shining.

"If you don't think I'll be put in prison for holding up people—and if you forgive me—for everything—why——"

Wheeler closed the door behind them with his foot. His hands were otherwise engaged.

THE END.

Propaganda for Thin Men.

"WHO started the idea that nobody loves a fat man?" asked the inquisitive boarder.

"I don't know," replied the educated boarder, "but I know there's nothing in it. I have eleven sisters and they all married fat men and brought their husbands home for father to support. Each and every one of them could have married a thin man just as well as not, and each of the thin men that my sisters could have married turned out to be good providers who owned their own homes and paid up automobile and insurance policies."

"Too true!" sighed the sentimental boarder. "As I well can testify. For years I loved and courted the amiable Arabella Armistice, and I flatter myself that my affection would have been reciprocated had it not been for the fat and sassy Peter Ponderoso, who came along and cut me out."

"Yes," said the worldly-wise boarder. "The statement that nobody loves a fat man is false and fallacious. It would be much more to the point to say that nobody loves a thin man. The idea seems to be that the thin man is never so good-natured, optimistic and generous as the corpulent person."

"Well, couldn't something be done about it?" inquired the attenuated boarder, anxiously.

"Why, yes," answered the practical boarder, without a moment's hesitation. "Publicity and propaganda are what is necessary. If a thin men's league could be organized and financed the attitude of humanity could be changed entirely, and the thin man could secure for himself all the affection now lavished upon the fat man. With a large number of publications enlisted in his cause the thin man could become so popular and enlist such heartfelt sympathy as to drive the fat one into innocuous desuetude. A series of titles such as these could be spread all over the land: 'Thin Man Advocates Golden Rule,' 'Fat Man Elopes with Mother-in-Law,' 'Thin Man Denounces Rascality,' 'Fat Man Robs Widow of Worldly Goods,' 'Thin Man Founds Orphan Asylum,' 'Fat Man Steals Man's Wife and Automobile,' 'Thin Man Takes Up Cudgel in Defense of House Renters,' 'Fat Man Founds Landlords' Association,' 'Thin Man Carries Baby Seven Miles to Colic Doctor,' 'Fat Man Steals Milk from Blind Kitten,' 'Thin Man Wears Overalls as Protest Against High Pants,' 'Fat Man Puts Pants Buttons in Contribution Box.'

"Then, of course, under these headings could follow stories of the wonderful reforms the thin men are undertaking with full details of how Fighting Fragile, the living skeleton, has declared that he will never stop his agitations until every fat and rich boodler is in jail and every citizen of this fair land owns his own home and automobile.

"Thus the people of the United States will soon accept the thin man as the poor man's friend and the fat man as an enemy to society."

"It wouldn't work," said the argumentative boarder. "Such propaganda would cause the thin man to swell with pride and the fat man to shrink from notoriety to such an extent that all men would approach a deadly uniformity of size."

* * *

Ice That Sinks.

AT 300,000 pounds pressure, water will turn to ice, tho a thermometer may show it is at 180 degrees F. The first effect of pressure on ice is to lower the freezing point, but if the force is increased a strange collapse comes at 2,000 atmospheres. The force that holds the molecules apart is overcome, and the ice shrinks 18 per cent in volume. It will then sink in water instead of floating.

SUCCEEDS WHERE DOCTORS FAIL

Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound Often Does That.—Read Mrs. Miner's Testimony

Churubusco, N. Y.—"I was under the doctor's care for over five years for backache and had no relief from his medicine. One day a neighbor told me about your Vegetable Compound and I took it. It helped me so much that I wish to advise all women to try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound for female troubles and backache. It is a great help in carrying a child, as I have noticed a difference when I didn't take it. I thank you for this medicine and if I ever come to this point again I do not want to be without the Vegetable Compound. I give you permission to publish this letter so that all women can take my advice."—Mrs. FRED MINER, Box 102, Churubusco, N. Y.

It's the same story over again. Women suffer from ailments for years. They try doctors and different medicines, but feel no better. Finally they take Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and you can see its value in the case of Mrs. Miner.

That's the truth of the matter. If you are suffering from any of the troubles women have, you ought to try this medicine. It can be taken in safety by young or old, as it contains no harmful drugs.

BIG MAIL FREE!

POST OFFICE
SAMPLE
SAMPLE
SAMPLE
SAMPLE

Would you like to get a lot of letters, circulars and packages? You probably know that manufacturers, supply houses, wholesalers and publishers buy names and addresses for the purpose of sending samples, advertising matter, papers and circulars to. Good names and addresses are hard to get and are quite expensive. We publish an AGENT'S DIRECTORY LIST containing names and addresses carefully arranged in alphabetical order. We send these Directory Lists to concerns we know are anxious for good names to send advertising matter to. Write your name very plainly so the printer will not make a mistake; be sure to give your street number and town also plainly written so that any mail addressed to you will reach you without fail. We have been publishing the Agent's Directory List for several years and refer you to the editor of this paper who will tell you we are reliable. All we ask is that you send 10 cents in silver and we will enter your name in our Agent's Directory List as above stated. Write today. Address Agent's Directory List, Indiana, Pa.

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AGENTS WANTED to advertise our business and introduce our elegant Watches. We will send this elegant guaranteed watch as a sample by parcel post C. O. D. $1.68 ONLY. Nickel plated case, stem wind and stem set, genuine American lever movement, guaranteed a reliable timekeeper. Pay your postman $1.68 only. Satisfaction guaranteed.
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12-Way Convertible Aluminum Ware Set FREE

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The most practical combination cooking set on the market—made of the famous "Lifetime" Aluminum Ware. It places at the disposal of the housewife 12 practical handy combinations of cooking utensils. This Aluminum Ware Set in your kitchen will surely fill you with pride and joy—no more smutty, grimy, nicked kitchen ware to dishearten and discourage you.

HOW TO GET IT If you want a set write me today. I have a plan whereby you can earn this Aluminum Ware in a few minutes' spare time without a cent of cost to you. Haven't space to tell you all about it here, but your name and address mailed to me together with this advertisement will do the trick—I will send you my complete plan by return mail. This is a case where we can exchange favors. Let me hear from you right away.

J. Rose, Premium Dept. B-24, 500 N. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.

Early Jokers in the Sierras.

IN SAVAGE CLUB PAPERS for 1868 there is an amusing article from the pen of Dr. Hingston, who acted as advance agent for Artemus Ward on his lecture tour thru the far western States and territories. The Savage Club, by the way, is a club of London, England, and its name has nothing to do with the story the doctor wrote for the club papers, altho it might well have been invented for this purpose. Dr. Hingston tells of how they went to the town of Austin and what happened there.

Austin was then a mining camp only a year old. It had a courthouse, however, and a newspaper. The fame of Artemus Ward had preceded him. The judge offered his courthouse for the lecture. But there was a new granite store just completed and altho it had no lights it seemed a better place for a lecture.

When lecture time arrived Artemus led the way to the store with a lamp he had borrowed from the hotel. Most of the audience followed him, and there he gave what the Austin Reveille declared was "the pioneer lecture in the Shoshone nation." This it was, in fact, for no other lecturer had up to then braved the dangers of the Sierras.

So successful was this lecture that Big Creek, a mining camp twelve miles away, sent a deputation to ask that the lecture be repeated there. Perils lay in wait on the way, but Hingston felt he would be able to withstand them. He had bought a big revolver and carried it. Artemus had also bought "a gun," but he kept his weapon at the bottom of his trunk. He called Hingston "Warrior."

"We'll do it, Warrior!" Artemus decided. "Only take care to have at the bottom of the handbills 'Admittance, one scalp. Front seats, two scalps.'"

The Young America saloon was the "lecture hall." Hingston says that 150 miners each paid $3. There they sat on kegs and on the floor, and Artemus lectured while the bar kept up its business, the barkeeper yelling his applause as loudly as the rest, who laughed themselves hoarse over "Babes in the Woods."

After the lecture Artemus and Hingston started for Austin in the buggy in which they had driven over. Suddenly, out of the night appeared a band of redskins. They captured the lecturer before his manager could draw that famous revolver. They made Artemus and Hingston get out of the buggy, and kept them on their knees under guard for half an hour. At last one of the Shoshones demanded in bad English Artemus' name.

"Artemus Ward," was the reply between teeth that chattered, not from fear, but from the frigid weather.

"Wha-r-r-r-a-he; Uo! Uo! Uo! American talkee man!" the Shoshone leader yelled. He made a lunge for Artemus' scalp while the band shouted:

"Talkee! Talkee!"

Artemus did his best to address them. He began a "lecture" but the Indians wouldn't listen. Still he kept on until one of the band cried:

"Bosh!"

The incident was ended right then and there, for Artemus now realized that his Indian captors were jokers. When they had all finished laughing the band gave the shivering Artemus and Hingston something warm to drink and escorted them back to Austin—with a warning not to be careless again in a wild country.

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Pile Sufferers

Don't Be Cut—Until You Try This New Home Cure That Anyone Can Use Without Discomfort or Loss of Time. Simply Chew up a Pleasant Tasting Tablet Occasionally and Rid Yourself of Piles.

Let Me Prove This Free.

My internal method for the treatment and permanent relief of piles is the correct one. Thousands upon thousands of grateful letters testify to this, and I want you to try this method at my expense.

No matter whether your case is of long standing or recent development, whether it is chronic or acute, whether it is occasional or permanent, you should send for this free trial treatment.

No matter where you live, no matter what your age or occupation, if you are troubled with piles, my method will relieve you promptly.

I especially want to send it to those apparently hopeless cases where all forms of ointments, salves, and other local applications have failed.

I want you to realize that my method of treating piles is the one most dependable treatment.

This liberal offer of free treatment is too important for you to neglect a single day. Write now. Send no money. Simply mail the coupon, but do this now, TODAY.

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382-R Page Bldg., Marshall, Mich.
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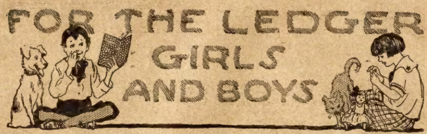
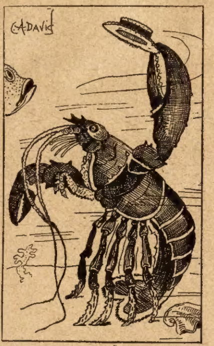


FOR THE LEDGER GIRLS AND BOYS

His Lordship the Lobster

MOST people think, if they take the trouble to think at all, that the natural color of a lobster is red, like a ripe tomato, because that is the way it appears as it drapes itself over a block of ice in restaurant windows. But they only turn red after being boiled, and at home in the water they are a greenish color—a shade of green that makes them practically invisible in their natural surroundings. They live away down at the bottom of the ocean, among the slimy, mud-covered rocks, and as far as anyone knows, have as good a time as the general run of us. They are equipped with eight regular legs, like a spider, and a huge pair of knobby arms, with a pair of pincers on each in place of hands. One pair of pincers, or claws as they are called, is always a lot bigger than the other. The big one is used mostly for crushing shells, so as to get at the meat inside, while the smaller is used for holding its prey, and for general fighting purposes. The lobster nurses a perpetual grouch, and never seems to be real carefree and happy unless it is fighting something; and whenever it goes out for a stroll, it always carries a chip on each shoulder and one on its back, and dares the world to knock one of them off. It manages to pick a fight with the first lobster it meets, regardless of the size of the stranger.



In their numerous battles, the loss of a few legs, or maybe a claw, is no uncommon thing, but that is a small matter, as all they have to do is to quit fighting and wait a while, until they grow out again. If one of them gets hurt in any way, it flies to the conclusion that it is the nearest lobster that is responsible, so it promptly jumps on it, with murder in its heart. If suddenly alarmed, a lobster has the strange power of throwing away one or both claws, just as a panic-stricken soldier might throw away his gun, so that his retreat might be unhampered.

As a lobster's body grows, and as the shell doesn't, it naturally has to endure a squeezing and pinching, compared with which the agony of a tight shoe is nothing. If your hat, collar, coat, trousers and shoes were all several sizes too small, you might have a faint idea how a lobster feels when it outgrows its shell. At this time its whole nature undergoes a change; it loses all interest in eating; becomes as shrinking and timid as it had been aggressive, and the prospect of a fight loses its oldtime lure. It retires from society and becomes a gloomy misanthrope, and if it were human, would seriously consider suicide, as a quick way out of its troubles. Its muscles become soft and flabby, and its very flesh seems to be so much mush, and it is possessed by a great desire to jam itself down in some crevice and stay hidden forever. At this point in its misery, the old shell gradually comes unbuttoned down the back, and after much pulling and tribulation, the creature finally manages to free itself from the old shell, and once more can draw a full breath without danger of bursting.

It is now clothed from head to tail in an entirely new skin, or shell, but it is too soft to afford any protection, so it has to remain in seclusion for a while longer, until the new shell hardens.

The new shell stretches like a rubber glove, and the body that has been squeezed up like a number ten foot in a seven shoe, grows so fast that one can almost see it getting bigger and bigger. When it has fully expanded, the shell hardens over it, and the lobster looks just as it did before, only several sizes larger. Its spirits now revive, and it swaggers forth, with the same old chips on its shoulders, and the same old desire for a fight. When engaged in its everyday business of looking for something to eat, the lobster walks along on the bottom after the fashion of a spider, but when the occasion calls for speed, it flirts its fanlike tail back under the body, and one flip of this wonderful paddle can send it backwards or forwards thru the water like a flash of light. And the strange part of it is, tho its eyes are located on the end of feelers that stand out in front, it can dart backwards a distance of eighteen or twenty feet and hurl itself in a narrow crevice in a rock, with the accuracy of a train backing into a tunnel.

A hen that lays an egg a day for a few months is liable to get her name in the poultry journals, but a lady lobster thinks nothing of laying 5,000 eggs when she is a year old, 10,000 the second year, and so on up to the limit of 15,000. And notwithstanding this supreme output, she never goes around bragging about it, but takes it as a matter of course. She glues these eggs together and sticks them about on the underside of her body, like so many porous plasters, and carries them with her until they hatch. When the babies leave the eggs, they look just like their mother, only they have no claws.

❧

The Man of Destiny.

MANY stories about the great Napoleon come to mind as the anniversary of the birth of that wonderful little man approaches. Here are two anecdotes that are, perhaps, not so well known as most.

Emperor Napoleon, after one of his great battles, gathered the remnant of his forces around him, and proceeded to compliment them in his characteristic manner, so endearing to the hearts of his soldiers. Finally Company D, of the Guards who had been in the thick of the fight, were ordered to present themselves, and to the astonishment of the Emperor a single soldier appeared. He was bound up in bandages and could barely walk.

"Where is the rest of your company?" asked the Emperor.

A tear welled in the old soldier's eye as he answered, "Your Majesty, they lie on the field dead," and then woefully added, "They fought better than I."

Napoleon's smooth face was a sure evidence of his dislike for a beard. In some anecdotes of the Russian campaign there is a story told of the great Emperor and a poor but witty barber, who had occasion to shave him.

Napoleon with some of his soldiers once arriving at a small village refreshed themselves with a good meal and baths. Napoleon wishing to be shaved the village barber was called in. While the poor fellow stropped his razor and passed it over the great Emperor's chin, he remained silent and seemingly melancholy, altho performing his work with amazing rapidity and smoothness. When he had finished, Napoleon complimented him, remarking, "But, man, why do you wear such a melancholy face? You should be happy to have the privilege of shaving an Emperor."

"I am doubly happy, your Majesty."

"Then what is it that troubles you?"

"Alas, your Majesty, when I think of the Kings upon Kings and Emperors that have died without knowing what it was to be shaved by me, I am sad and melancholy."

❧

SUMMER.

HOW fine it is to be alive
When summer skies are blue
And laughter rings around the world
And joy marks all we do.

For summer is vacation time
And cares are packed away
With lessons books upon the shelf
For some far distant day.

Vacation time is play time
When all the world seems young
And happy words and laughter
Are found on every tongue.

For old folks all grow young again
And hearts grow light with cheer—
The earth is just a playing-ground
For summer time is here.

MAKE BELIEVE.

I LIVE in the land of Make-Believe
Where dwarfs and giants dwell,
Where every night at stroke of twelve
There sounds the fairy bell.

I lie upon the hill each day
And close my eyes so tight
And softly call from out the woods
My fav'rite fairy sprite.

And she will take me by the hand
To lands that no one knows—
To far off lands of Make-Believe
Next door to Let's Suppose.

And there with all the fairy folk
That all boys love so well,
I play, till nursie calls me
And breaks the fairy spell.

❧

Spelling Cat.

"GEORGE," said the teacher, "what does 'c-a-t' spell?"

"Don't know sir."

"What does your mother keep to catch mice?" asked the teacher, intending to give the lad a hint.

"A trap, sir," replied George.

"No, no. What animal is very fond of milk?" tried the teacher again.

"A baby, sir."

"You dunce. What was it that scratched your sister's face?"

"My nails, sir."

"George, I'm losing my patience. There, do you see that animal on the fence?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then tell me what 'c-a-t' spells."

"Kitten, sir."

❧

Nothing Lost.

"MY DARLING," said a fond mother, who believed in appealing to children's tender feelings instead of punishing them, "if you are so naughty you will grieve mamma so that she will get ill and have to lie in bed in a dark room and may die and have to be taken to the cemetery and be buried, and you——" The child had become more solemn, but an angelic smile overspread his face at his mother's last words, and, throwing his arms about her neck, he exclaimed: "Oh, mamma, and may I sit beside the coachman?"

❧

It Was There.

"HERE, boy," exclaimed the excited little man as he rushed up to a page in a big hotel. "Run up to my room and see if my umbrella is there. Hurry, now, because I've just got five minutes to catch a train."

Three minutes later the boy came tripping down the stairs.

"Yes, sir," he said, "It's there, all right.

❧

Something to Make Thinkers Think.

Hidden Poets.

303—The letters that spell the names of these poets are consecutive.

1. Mark eats too much.
2. "Stop," he said, looking Raymond in the eye.
3. She'll eye the work thoroly.
4. "Nonsense!" he exclaimed, "what are your words worth?"
5. "So long, fellow traveler," his companion said when they parted.
6. "Do that up brown, Ingeborg."
7. John cared not a whit, manly that he was, for the danger.
8. Mr. Tenny's on the golf links.
9. By Ronald's quick action a panic was saved.

Progressive Enigma.

304—I am composed of four letters and form the name of a fine city of the United States.

My 1, 2, 3 is a verb.
My 1, 2, 3, 4 is a lotion.
My 2, 3, 4 is a tree.
My 3, 4, 5, 6 is a part of the leg.
My 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 is cleansing.
My 8, 9 is a preposition.
My 9, 10 is a upon.
My 8, 9, 10 is a measure.

Five Word Square.

305—1. A Coniferous tree.
2. Conscious.
3. A carnivorous bird.
4. Part of the verb "to creep."
5. A writer of stories for boys.

ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S PUZZLES.

300—Riddle-mee-ree.

History.

301—Hidden Animals.

1. Bear. 2. Lion. 3. Badger. 4. Lamb. 5. Goat. 6. Leopard. 7. Horse. 8. Beaver.

302—Four Word Square.

W A S H
A S I A
S I L L
H A L T

It is not desired that readers send in the answers to the puzzles. They are offered simply as brain teasers, and the correct answers will be printed the following week.

The Observer

He Keeps His Ears and Eyes Open as He Goes Along.

IN TEXAS, they arrested a minister for carrying concealed weapons. It turns out that the concealed was a sermon for the next Sunday, but it was a red-hot weapon and might have hurt a dozen men's consciences.

—

In Fall River, the newspaper men have to be careful of what they write. If they write that a grocer's horse ran away, they must go way back and tell about the grocer's grandfather, and if the grandfather was sent to jail for thirty days for stealing a sheep, they must tell whether the sheep was black or white.

—

They have discovered a woman out West who has thirty-four corns on her feet. She is trying to beat the corn crop of Kansas.

—

They have found out that a certain merchant, in Ohio, has been making 300 per cent profit right along. Sam Untermyer cannot spread himself all over the United States.

—

After being married thirty-two years, a husband in Iowa hugged his wife so hard that he broke three of her ribs. He will, of course, be put on exhibition with an admission charge of thirty-five cents, including war tax.

—

Are the feet of our women growing larger is a question which excites some of the colleges just at the present time. The sex has kicked so much about the high price of hats that it has affected their feet.

—

It is estimated that about five tons of old rope are made up into ten cent cigars every week. This country is learning economy.

—

Six years ago, a dog owned by William Scott of Delaware, bit a man who was climbing over a fence, and the lawsuit which was begun is not ended yet, altho the dog is dead and the bite was healed long ago.

—

They have a hog in Wisconsin which weighs 1,200 pounds, but whether he keeps a clothing store or not the papers do not say.

—

The German papers are announcing that their roosters do no longer crow, but that is not a very curious thing. No rooster ever crows after he gets a good licking.

CLASSIFIED WANT ADS

Information-- The rate for one insertion in The Saturday Blade and one insertion in the Chicago Ledger is 35 cents a word, minimum 14 words, less 3% for cash. Each initial and group of figures is counted as a word, and the name and address are also counted. This is the minimum rate; neither more nor less is charged, irrespective of size or number of insertions. An ad may appear in both publications of the same week, or in the Blade of one week and the Ledger of the next.

W. D. BOYCE CO., Publisher, 500-514 N. Dearborn St., CHICAGO.

SALESMEN WANTED

STOCK SALESMEN. OIL ISSUE PAYING large monthly dividends. Salesmen making $250.00 weekly and upwards. Very attractive fast selling proposition. Has strong appeal to investors. Top commissions and thorough co-operation. Live wires only. Permanent position. John A. Carter & Co., 20 E. Jackson, Chicago.

EASY TO SELL GROCERIES, PAINTS, automobile oils, roofing, stock food to consumers from samples. No capital or experience necessary. Steady, profitable work. Commissions advanced. Satisfaction guaranteed; 50 years in business. Write for full particulars. Loverin & Browne Co., wholesale Grocers, 1759 So. State St., Chicago, Ill.

AGENTS WANTED

TAILORING EXPLOSION! COMPETITION knocked out! One price line, $50.00 all-wool suits at $29.75, including a good profit for you. You get your profit the minute you take the order. Big swatch line—80 different fabrics in handsome carrying case. Salesmen make $100.00 a week. Can use a few more good men. Write fully, state experience. Park Tailoring Company, Dept. 347, Chicago.

SELL MINITMEND FOR TIRES AND tubes; cost 2c repair; surpasses vulcanizing; save 500 per cent; every auto and accessory dealer buys; profits amazing; Shaw made $21 first day; Hart $155 first week. Particulars and free sample. Colonial Rubber Co., Desk 40, Philadelphia.

GENERAL AGENTS. SOMETHING NEW. Whirlwind sellers. "Repeat" Washing Powder. Washes clothes without rubbing. Women throw away washboards. Big profits. Exclusive territory. Write today free package. Kittredge Co., 13 Putnam St., Tunkhannock, Pa.

AGENTS—NEW INVENTION. HARPER'S Ten-Use brush set and fibre broom. It sweeps, washes and dries upstairs windows, scrubs and mops floors and does 5 other things. [illegible] profits; easy seller. Free trial offer. Harper Brush Works, Dept. B, Fairfield, Iowa.

BIG MONEY AND FAST SALES. EVERY owner buys gold initials for his auto. You charge $1.50, make $1.35. Ten orders daily easy. Write for particulars and free samples. American Monogram Co., Dept. 104, East Orange, N. J.

EVERY USER ELECTRIC LIGHT BUYS Hold-a-lite. Hangs, stands, stretches, catches anywhere. Sells itself. 200% profit. Sample 25c, no stamps. Money-back guarantee. Theobald Specialty Co., Jonesboro, Arkansas.

AGENTS TO EARN BIG PROFITS WITH our quick-selling non-alcoholic extracts, toilet articles and household necessities. Open territory. No money required. We trust you. Hurry! Write today. Dept. 134, The Linro Co., St. Louis, Mo.

AGENTS—CREW MEN, NOVELTY MEN, Gloo-Pen, a 50c mucilage fountain pen; everybody buys on demonstration. Write for big profit plan. Gloo-Pen Co., 56-BB Pine St., New York.

SELL FRATERNAL WALL EMBLEMS AND other money making novelties. All the rage. Big variety. Write for free sample plan. Kier Fraternal Emblem Co., Dept. C-109, 538 S. Clark St., Chicago, Ill.

AGENTS—COST $5; YOUR PROFIT, $103.75; transferring monograms on autos, trunks, bags, furniture, etc.; no experience; no license. Write for free samples. World Monogram Co., Dept. 17, 244 Market St., Newark, N. J.

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SELL "AMENZ" SHIRTS—BEST-LOOKING, biggest value. Manufacturer to wearer. Every order nets profit $1.50-$2.25. Write for winning sales plan. Menzin Shirt Co., 3863-B, Third Ave., New York.

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AGENTS—SIX NEW FAST SELLING NECESSITIES, big demand, unique selling plan, makes dollar an hour, credit given, samples free. Consolidated Portrait Co., Desk A, Chicago.

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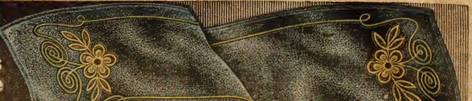

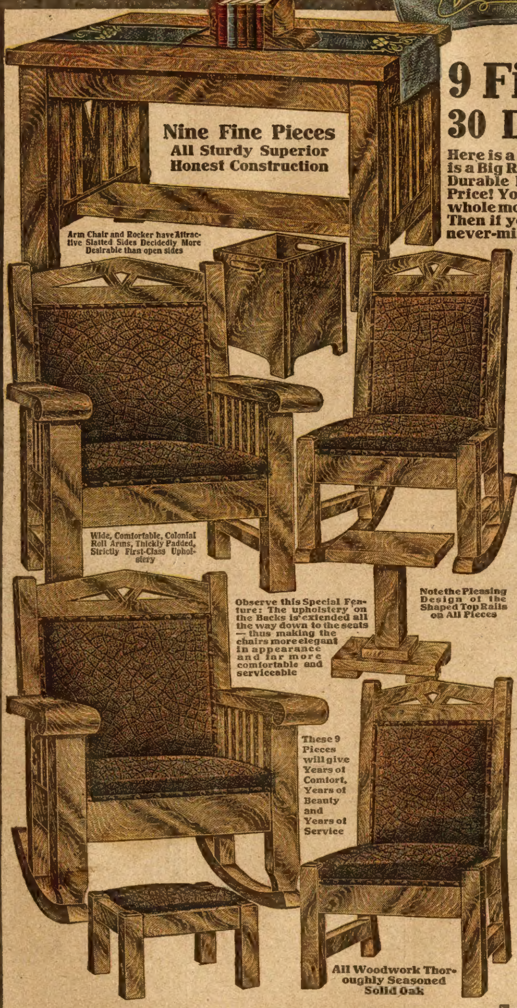
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